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A

MEMOIR OF IRELAND

IN 1850.

BY AN EX-M.P.

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A MEMOIR OF IRELAND,

&c., &c.

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MEMOIR OF IRELAND

IN 1850.

BY AN EX-M.P.

Lambert, Henry

"Sciagurata condizione di questa mia patria! Se patria si puo chiamare una terra cosi avvilita dalla fortuna, dagli uomini, da se medésima."

DUBLIN
JAMES M'GLASHAN, 50 UPPER SACKVILLE-ST.
JAMES RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY, LONDON.
1851.

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A MEMOIR OF IRELAND

IN 1850.

CHAPTER I.

SKETCH OF THE PAST AND PRESENT CONDITION OF IRELAND.

The degraded and forlorn condition of Ireland has long been the subject of cheerless and unprofitable investigation. The remedial measures proposed from time to time have been abandoned as impracticable; or, when carried into execution, have proved either utterly inefficient, or, not unfrequently, have aggravated the evils they were intended to palliate. This unfavourable result has arisen from the want of accurate knowledge of the case, from infirmity of purpose, or from the idea so prevalent among men of narrow intellect, that it is easier to rule by artifice, by corruption, and by internal discord, than by the higher policy of a wise, humane, and equitable government. These causes, some of long standing, and all of most injurious effect, have produced a state of society altogether unparalleled and hard to be understood. From the first invasion of Ireland, the dominion of England has been exercised in abuse and maintained by violence; the constitutional authority of the laws has

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never been firmly established, and for a lengthened period, the body of the people groaned beneath the jealous tyranny of a triumphant faction. The power of oppressing has passed from the hands of the few, and, as it often happens, has been replaced by the licentiousness of the many. The country was not thoroughly conquered, hence there was no blending of races, no community of interest, but an interminable warfare waged in a spirit of the most vindictive and atrocious retaliation. Unskilled in the art of war, and ever at variance with each other, the natives might have been completely subdued or extirpated; but the descendants of the original settlers, "*Hibernis Hiberniores*," took up and maintained the conflict with even more determined hostility to the parent country.

To these elements of contention was added, in the course of a few centuries, the deadlier ingredient of religious hatred, which quickly absorbed the others, and has ever since continued to exercise its pernicious and desolating influence over all the relations of social existence.

There are many difficulties to be encountered in the ungrateful task of describing the actual state of Ireland, the chief of which arises from the almost impenetrable cloud of falsehood and misrepresentation that is spread over everything Irish. The whole frame of society is one vast fiction of no very reputable kind. From motives of self-interest, from party feeling, from egregious national vanity, or from a thirst for popularity to be gained on one side of the channel only by exaggerated and preposterous praise, and on the other by wholesale calumnies of the foulest and most malignant nature, the real position of Ireland is far less known than that of any other nation

of Europe. Then, the strange discrepancies of disposition and habits, the deep-rooted prejudices, the cherished animosities of sect and race, make it nearly impossible to define the national character, or to apply successfully a system of general legislation. There are, no doubt, some features which may be treated as national: some master evils must be met and eradicated before a reasonable hope of improvement can be indulged. This great object can be accomplished only by an Executive at once irresistibly powerful and unquestionably honest. For a series of years Ireland has had no government for any useful or salutary purpose. It has had government for official details, for paltry backstairs intrigue, for balancing factions, for theoretical experiment, and, above all, for the judicious management of patronage; but the greater and more important functions of government were nowhere exercised for the regeneration of an impoverished and distracted people.

In Ireland no man would venture to state all that he knows to be true; if he did, he would be met at once by a storm of denial and invective which would render his assertions nugatory, and his position neither safe nor agreeable. No public man can obtain influence, nor will he be even tolerated—he is a "bad Irishman" unless he begin by heaping incense on the shrine of national self-esteem.

There are matters, also, of paramount interest and of imperative necessity, that should be dealt with, not discussed.

One of the most momentous phases of national character has been little observed; the morbid and restless spirit of democracy tinged to a considerable extent, as it ever must be, with the principles of what is termed commun-

ism, appears to have taken a strong hold of the popular affections. Already may be distinctly perceived those tumultuous and revolutionary heavings that precede the birth and the development of democratic society. Imagination cannot figure a position of greater unhappiness and disquiet than that of a nation at strife with existing monarchical and aristocratic institutions. The sore and rankling passion of equality allows of no repose, and excludes every other thought in its desperate pursuit of an unattainable object. The great Author of our existence has decreed that there shall be rank and order among his creatures; superior talent, greater industry, more successful enterprise, all tend to produce a difference of station which no human efforts can destroy. But, although superiority of mind cannot be annihilated, it can be reviled, insulted, and excluded from political power. A man of genius and independent spirit will never stoop to the abject prostration that the multitude exacts. How little talent of a high order is to be found in the House of Representatives of the United States. How small an amount of distinguished ability, information, or eloquence, has been contributed by democratic Ireland to the Imperial Senate !

In the great Western Republic men of higher mind shrink from the public view : they are content to be tolerated in their obscurity, surrounded and oppressed by a despotism that will acknowledge no superiority and tolerate no difference of opinion.* Many circumstances have

* " En Amérique, la majorité trace un circle formidable autour de la pensée. Au dedans de ces limites lécrivain est libre, mais malheur à lui s'il ose en sortir. Vous resterez parmi les hommes, mais vous perderez vos droits à l'humanité. Quand vous vous approcherez de vos semblables, ils vous fuiront comme un être impur ; et ceux qui croient à votre inno-

combined to produce this state of feeling, and to foster it in Ireland. The merciless oppression of former ages has been succeeded by the saturnalia of our times. From a horde of crouching slaves, we have become a nation of rampant grievance-mongers; with this peculiarity, that, *overlooking the evils that weigh heavily on the State*, we clamour for impossibilities, and vehemently denounce those imperfections which, for the most part, are merely the concomitants of all human institutions.

When we consider the treatment that Ireland has all along experienced from its powerful neighbour, who trampled it under foot, and then, with an inhuman and fiend-like policy, flung freedom to the Irish whom they had rendered unfit for the rational enjoyment of it, letting loose at each other the persecutors and their victims, when it was no longer feasible to oppress both, can it be a matter of astonishment that a strong latent feeling of aversion and mistrust towards England and her dominion should be the mainspring of every popular movement in Ireland? Can we wonder that the most beloved and trusted leader was he, whose knowledge of the forms of law enabled him to guide his followers within a hair's-breadth of indictable aggression on the power they loathe and the laws they repudiate? Little has been done to allay this long-treasured sense of injury; for little, indeed, has been done in the way of alleviation or redress for that unhappy country. The delusion of moral force* has

cence, ceux la mêmes vous abandonneront, car ou les fuirait à leur tour. Allez en prix, je vous laisse la vie, mais je vous la laisse pire que la mort."—*De Tocqueville sur la Democratie.*

This is liberty, democratic liberty!

* "How to resist force without striking again, or how to strike with reverence, will need some skill to make intelligible. He that can recon-

had its day, and the practice of constitutional resistance has yet to be learned. Political agitation in Ireland is the surging of a perturbed spirit under the fetters of the law, which incommode, but cannot control, its convulsive action.

Were Ireland two thousand miles out in the Atlantic, a separation from Great Britain would have long since taken place without any extraordinary effort.* Nothing, however, can be more mischievously absurd than the perpetual aspiration after an end that is politically and geographically impossible. If the public mind must be kept in a state of ceaseless ferment, if agitation is to constitute the "whole duty of man" in Ireland, at least let it be directed to some useful purpose, some rational and attainable object.

In investigating the moral, social, and political condition of Ireland, it is essential to keep constantly in view the treatment it has experienced from its rulers. It would otherwise be extremely difficult to comprehend how such an anomalous combination of conflicting evils could have been effected. They who seek to win public favour by sacrificing truth to national vanity, must be prepared to hold that either political institutions and the use made of power exert no influence over the human mind; or, that in the case of Ireland, by a stupendous moral miracle, the worst of government has produced the

cile blows and reverence may, for aught I know, desire for his pains a civil, respectful cudgeling wherever he can meet with it."—*Locke on Government.*

* "On a beaucoup exagéré d'ailleurs les efforts que firent les Américains pour se soustraire au joug des Anglois. Séparés par 1300 lieues de mer de leurs enemis, secourus par un puissant allié, les Estats Unis durent la victoire à leur position bien plus encore qu'à la valeur de leurs armées, ou au patriotisme de leurs citoyens."—*De Tocqueville.*

best of people, even "the finest peasantry on the face of the earth." It is, indeed, time that this vile and treacherous adulation should cease, or at least that it should no longer be a passport to the confidence and the affections of a credulous, warm-hearted, and deeply-injured race. There can be no hope of extensive and permanent reform for Irishmen until they dare to look truth in the face, until habits of punctuality and order be created, and a just horror of crime and outrage be established. This is not to be done by mob harangues, or by the workings of clubs, by dextrous skirmishing with the laws; and least of all, by a shuffling, imbecile, pusillanimous administration, coquetting alternately with rival factions for their reluctant and precarious support.

The regeneration of Ireland is not to be achieved by small or dubious means, by diplomatic stratagems, or by the futile dogmas of political economy. Procrastination and evasion constitute the ground-work of modern English tactics for Ireland; recourse was had to periodical coercion to compel a suspension of crime when it had become daring and intolerable, but it was ever unaccompanied by healing or preventive measures; it was more like vengeance than justice, and its effects ceased altogether with its immediate action. Concession, too, has been tried with indifferent success. I do not mean the great act of Roman Catholic Emancipation, but the smaller game of spurious liberalism, catching at a despicable popularity, by flattering the prejudices and the passions of the ignorant and the worthless; wasting, in the pursuit of cherished illusions, those moral and physical resources that, benevolently controlled and wisely directed, might have raised our poor countrymen to a state of happiness and independence. Had it been the deliberate intention

of our rulers to further the spread of democratic principles and to hasten the outbreak of revolution, they could not have employed more effectual means than those they have from time to time adopted. The unpaid magistrates were insulted and persecuted to such an extent as to make them timid in the performance of their duties. If some justices of the peace had abused their power, the parties should have been dismissed or punished, and the office itself freed from imputation. Instead of this, the entire body was consigned to public scorn, and a number of stipendiary magistrates were appointed, which, according to one of the ablest political writers of the day, is in itself a democratic revolution.

Still, following out the democratic principle in one of its most mischievous developments, which renders a Government at once shabby and expensive, admidst an outcry for retrenchment, a host of minor paid situations were created, and are continually augmented, the consequence of which is, that disdaining the toilsome pursuits of honest industry, two-thirds of the Irish people are engaged in a hot pursuit of places of one kind or another in the gift of Government.—The national taste for "monster meetings" was abundantly gratified, and ample opportunities were afforded for the patriotic recreations of law-making, denouncing, and domineering. It was a perpetual ostracism.—In the same spirit the Grand Jury Laws were altered ; the idlest and most ignorant portion of the inhabitants of assize-towns were invited to assist at the deliberations of the Grand Jury, to facilitate the dispatch of business, and to overawe, by the actual presence of so much enlightened integrity and virtue, the corrupt and fraudulent practices of the country gentlemen. If such were really the opinion formed of an Irish

Grand Jury, would it not have been a safer and more effective plan to have at once transferred the execution of all public works to the officers of Government? Yet, notwithstanding the barony rehearsals, and the preventive check of the Grand Jury bear-garden, I assert positively that there have been grosser jobs and far more flagrant peculation perpetrated in one year of the reformed fiscal, than in twenty under the exploded system, with all its laxity and imperfections, which, certainly, I do not pretend either to vindicate or deny.

Thus matters went on—a strange medley of the tragic and the ridiculous; the rulers trying to cajole the people, and the people trying to bully their rulers, and to wrest from them, by fraud or by force, whatever they deemed essential to their somewhat indefinite ideas of freedom and independence. The delirium of national rights was succeeded by the Rebellion of 1798. The Legislative Union followed closely after, and ever since, the management of Ireland has been but a series of small manœuvres, a stop-gap administration, a sort of political patch-work, all tending to debase and injure the national character and condition. One only governor of transcendent mind was granted to the Irish, the Marquess Wellesley; but his large and enlightened policy was thwarted by the jealousy and the division of his English associates, and the untameable ferocity of Irish faction. This truly great man—distinguished even amidst the extraordinary talent of his celebrated family—was recalled on a change of ministry; and, not long after, having been shamefully betrayed and sacrificed by his party* withdrew into private life, to the enjoyment of those literary pursuits in

* It was stated in the newspapers, at the time of Lord Wellesley's death, that his Lordship had desired that his papers, giving a full account of *this*

which this accomplished statesman took delight, to the latest moment of his useful and honourable career.

The courteous and hand-kissing administration of the bland and polished Normanby opened the gaols for felons and the Castle to the canaille. Popular he was beyond all precedent; but what did his popularity effect for Ireland? Was the general condition of the country improved—were its resources brought into profitable activity—was the tone of its morality raised—were the people made happier or better by the fascination of his graceful and untiring affability? Alas! no.—There is not a page of authentic Irish history that can be read by an Irishman without strong feelings of shame and indignation; though an occasional ray of genius, eloquence, and patriotism may flash through the gloom, it serves only to make the darkness more hideous and oppressive. Next came the blank of my Lord Fortescue's obscure administration, which requires no further comment.

When, in 1841, Sir Robert Peel was placed at the head of affairs, he declared that Ireland was the difficulty—he made it the opprobrium—of his administration. The sum of his Irish policy may be described in a few words. He sent over an honest and amiable, but most inefficient Chief Governor, and for Lord Chancellor, an able lawyer, but most ignorant statesman. His Chief Secretary was a well-disposed and upright nobleman, with good intentions and fluctuating opinions; and as a propitiatory offering to the nation at large, he chose for Under Secretary an Irish gentleman of strong party feelings and very moderate abilities. For the rest, Sir

transaction, should be given to the public. Has this been done? Or has the injunction of the illustrious dead been set aside in compliment to the worthless survivors?

R. Peel copied with tolerable accuracy the hacknied and pitiful plan of his predecessors, and after five years of rather disreputable contention with the great Agitator of the day, he gave up Ireland as he had received it, the scandal of nations, the crime and the scourge of England.

Of the worthy Earl of Besborough little need be recorded. The principal events of his brief rule were, an attempt to expound the provisions of the useless labour scheme, in which the interpreter was the more unintelligible of the two, and the solemn tasting, with vast applause on the part of the spectators, a certain nutritive porridge, especially devised by the renowned M. Soyer for the removal of Irish starvation. Will it be credited hereafter, that at a moment of such awful distress, when famine pressed sorely on the land, the Prime Minister of England, the admired descendant of the demigod of Whig mythology, could propose no more efficient measures of relief for a sinking nation than a blundering Act of Parliament and the adventitious services of a French restaurateur!

The Lord Lieutenant died in the viceroyalty, and with his funeral ended every trace and recollection of his political performances. A well-meaning, honourable gentleman Lord Besborough unquestionably was, and useful also in his way. As president of a farming society or teller of a division, his merits were undeniable; but qualities of a far different order are required to rule the troubled waves of Irish wrongs and Irish dissensions.

At length, with a flourish of trumpets, came the "able and energetic" Earl of Clarendon, since Knight of the Garter. His Excellency was received with the acclamations due to the fame of his diplomatic exploits in Spain, and his approved devotion to the sublime myste-

ries of free trade. The new Lord Lieutenant was not altogether a stranger to the country over which he came to preside. We learn from the "Recollections of Lord Cloncurry," that, as Mr. Villiers, he had taken, in conjunction with some other "energetic" persons, an active and influential, though by no means an ostentatious, part in the direction of Irish affairs.

Months passed away; the sufferings of the people were not relieved, while rebellion stood forward unabashed and unchecked. Every week fresh instructions were extensively circulated, pointing out the most effective mode of attack on disciplined forces; suggesting the conversion of soda-water bottles into hand-grenades, the construction of barricades in towns, according to the latest Parisian practice, and the most expeditious manner of dispatching her Majesty's troops travelling by railroads. Nothing was omitted that considerable talent and indefatigable zeal could supply for public information in this department. During this eventful period, the operations of the accomplished Viceroy were apparently confined to a benevolent admonition addressed to certain homicides in the county of Tipperary, and a sort of polemical skirmish with Roman Catholic prelates, in which it was said that his Excellency was not particularly fortunate.

As far as circumstances had permitted, the ministerial measure of relief in 1846–7 was well calculated to produce an outbreak similar to that which has since desolated and degraded Paris. The millions dissipated in the demoralising mockery of useless works, were all so much devoted to foment the worst and most dangerous propensities of the multitude; if insurrection were delayed, it was solely by the want of sufficient materials and

training. Both were in course of being provided, when a preliminary affair of words commenced between the bold abettors of treason and the skilful diplomatist of the Castle. After years of advantageous compromise with *well-disciplined sedition*, at the eleventh hour it was, that ministers resolved to bear down on the honest, undisguised, and therefore no longer serviceable treason. While opponents were to be annoyed, or parliamentary support procured, the choicest gifts of Crown patronage were showered on those who kept up a perpetual turmoil of political excitement, and boasted of "driving coaches-and-six through Acts of Parliament!" Such was, such is, and ever will be, the policy of our present rulers towards ill-fated Ireland.

Suddenly there arose a cry of panic and dismay. Loyal addresses were anxiously required, the Roman Catholic clergy were consulted, the Orangemen of the North were soothed and commended; in the confusion of the moment, a sum of six hundred pounds was advanced to purchase arms for *them* by some generous individuals unknown. Stringent coercion bills were hurried through Parliament, troops poured in from England, and forces of every description were harassed in the constant pursuit of an enemy supposed to be everywhere, yet nowhere to be found. A dreary ball was held at the Castle on St. Patrick's night, where the shivering guests, expecting every instant to be blown up, thought more of gunpowder and pikes than gallopades and polkas. It is supposed that, with the exception of Holbein's famous "Dance of Death," there never was witnessed a scene of more ghastly merriment. Trade and commerce were entirely interrupted, and every one shuddered as he contemplated the approaching catastro-

phe.—The insurrectionary campaign began and ended in the cabbage-garden at Ballingarry ; with little credit, it is true, for discretion or ability, to the insurgent leaders, and, if possible, with less for foresight or statesman-like talents, to the victorious Executive. But, it did not consist with the reputation or the projects of Government to allow this deplorable piece of absurdity to pass into immediate oblivion. The unseemly trepidation at the Castle was to be vindicated by the magnitude of the peril from which the State had just been rescued. The authors of this abortive outbreak were taken, tried for high treason, and convicted. But, the extreme penalty of the law which, under the circumstances, it would have been monstrous to inflict, was, after considerable delay, and a special Act of Parliament obtained for the purpose, commuted into exile for life. Perhaps, had these rash and thoughtless men been indicted for a riot only, and when convicted, sentenced accordingly, all the ends of justice might have been attained, and the dignity of offended authority sufficiently asserted. If modern statesmen could condescend to profit by experience, ample proof was given of the extreme impolicy of allowing principles to be disseminated and associations to be formed tending to disturb the public tranquillity, and to overturn existing institutions. The sad affair of 1848, permitted, as it were, to grow up under the unaccountable supineness of Government, might have been attended by formidable consequences, had it not been for the want of experienced leaders, for the secession of the Roman Catholic clergy, and, still more, from the despondency and inanition caused by two wasting years of famine and disease. The flame of rebellion was thus extinguished, but the deep, inherent hatred of England, its

laws, religion and authority, smoulders beneath the deceitful ashes. It may be asked, why recall those unhappy recollections? Simply because we have no other theme of equal interest; because there is not the faintest prospect of better treatment. The same evils exist, the same palliatives and stimulants are applied—the one inert, the other actively mischievous. It is the duty of all who are bound to Ireland by ties that they cannot, perhaps would not, sever, to assist in tearing aside the veil that folly and fatuity have thrown over its forlorn condition.

There is no record among civilized nations of such a spectacle as Ireland now presents. A people crumbling away, resources wasted, or neglected, a large and important class hunted to destruction by the servants of the Crown; pauperism and demoralization rapidly increasing, dissension of every kind raging in the midst of famine, sickness, desolation, and despair! Yet, there is nothing in all this that could not be readily accounted for, nothing whatever that would not admit of a remedy, if men could be found with courage to apply it; notwithstanding that it is the favourite cant of our incapables, that "*legislation can do nothing*" for those whom legislation has ruined! Such are the results of a prolonged series of wilful misrule, which seems likely to attain its climax under the present possessors of office, who, having confined their *remedial* measures for Ireland, during the late session, to an additional incitement to discord by granting a low and compulsory franchise, are too well pleased to find themselves still in power, after the perilous escapes of the session, to consider to what extent they may become responsible before the meeting of Parliament.

The Repeal speculation appears to have worn itself

out. It is questionable that it ever amounted to a reality in the minds of its enlightened supporters. Repeal never rested on its own merits, but on the demerits of government. In its utmost honesty, it was but the dream of indignant, or disordered spirits. Were that object attainable by "peaceful agitation," it would inevitably have led, at no distant period, to a hostile collision with England. A House of Commons elected on Repeal principles, and sitting in College-green, would, in the actual temper of the times, make short work with the aristocratic portion of the constitution and commercial intercourse with England. Popular edicts would be resisted by the peers, and their extinction as a branch of the Legislature would follow as a matter of course. The "golden link of the Crown" would quickly be reduced to the utmost degree of attenuation, and England would have to battle for her existence, as a first-rate power, with an enemy too formidable and too near home, to be tolerated as an independent state. From national pride, from a just sense of imminent danger, perhaps even from that rooted vice in human nature, the disposition to hate those whom we are conscious of having injured, all classes of Englishmen would cordially join to reconquer Ireland: and, though a destructive guerilla war might for a space be maintained, the well-disciplined troops of Great Britain, the most effective artillery in the world, a numerous and powerful navy, which steam has rendered almost independent of wind or tide, remove all doubt as to the final issue of the struggle. Repeal, however, has passed away; it was identified with its prophet, and it fell with the autocrat of Conciliation Hall. The wild enthusiasm of his partisans and the vehement indignation of his opponents must have time to soften down into feelings ap-

proaching to impartiality, before a correct estimate can be formed of the character of that extraordinary man. It will be for the future historian to decide whether the warm, unbounded confidence of his countrymen was judiciously bestowed, and whether they derived proportionate benefits from their utter devotion to his cause, and from the vast sums which they annually poured into his mysterious exchequer, not out of their abundance, but of their want.

The chaos of Irish calamities would be a subject as wearisome as it appears to be hopeless, were it not, that amidst the numerous ills that gather around Great Britain, the imminently hazardous position of so large a portion of its empire excites a painful superiority of interest. Each successive step taken by a perplexed and vacillating government has only aggravated the destitution, as it exhausted the remaining means of the country. Ministers avow, that they have no remedial measures to offer, nor any expectation for Ireland, but that want may work itself out, and universal ruin announce the consummation of that repose on which a new fabric of social institutions may be erected. In Ireland, law and persecution are identical in the estimation of the people, and justice suffers. The most atrocious criminal is considered as a victim struggling to escape from the satellites of power, and whom public sympathy absolves and endeavours to shelter. It is not by playing off parties against each other, by alternate fits of culpable indulgence and excessive severity, that a salutary sense of the benefits of law and order can be implanted in the minds of the majority, and that they can be brought to look on a malefactor as an offender against society, and an enemy of the human race.

The due administration of the law is inaccessible to every shade of party feeling; it affords no triumph; it gratifies no revenge; it decides and acts on the mere merits of the case, without regard to the rank or condition of the conflicting parties. It gives to the entire community, "not mad equality, but equal rights." Unfortunately, there is little in the daily proceedings of justice to convince the people of Ireland that the law is the common protector of all classes. The criminal courts are tiltyards of chicanery, where perjury, intimidation, and the ingenious distortion of law decide for victory or defeat. Hence, the frequent and revolting impunity of crime; an assassin excites no feeling of abhorrence; he is known and protected.* Instances without number might be produced, where crowds looked on with indifference at the noon-day slaughter of their fellow-creature, rhetorically described as "the wild justice of revenge."† In England, lawful authority is generally revered, and cheerfully obeyed, for it is known and felt to be the safeguard of every man's property and rights. In Ire-

* Murder of Mr. Pike, 1850.—"This fearful transaction occurred in the broad daylight, upon an open public road, where travellers and vehicles daily pass; in no glen, no lane, no mountain fastness, no ravine, no jungle, but on the common thoroughfare, with the full sunshine of heaven beaming upon it; numbers of the peasantry going to market, several inhabited houses within a short distance of the spot, and nearly fifty people working in the bog; men they cannot be called, for they saw Mr. Pike murdered, they beheld the assassins walk deliberately across the bog after they had committed the diabolical crime, and not one person followed to arrest them, not one came forward to give evidence before the coroner."—*Newspaper of the day.*

† A widow reduced to beggary by the brutal murder of her husband, has been known to hurry the interment of his body in order to prevent, if possible, the holding of an inquest, which might have led to the apprehension of the murderer. I was a witness of the fact.

land it is despised and detested, evaded, or violated with perfect impunity. It was observed by an Irish nobleman, of high character and distinguished ability, in a report to the late Marquess Wellesley, that "combination surpasses the law in vigour, promptitude, and efficacy, and it is safer to violate the law than to obey it." I am well aware that this, among the rest, is denied in the face of glaring facts, and, like the rest, it is denied for a purpose, not of improvement, certainly; while they, whose honest attachment to the blighted land of their birth has survived all the vicissitudes of her suffering and degradation, are compelled to acknowledge, with sorrow and shame, the truth of the impeachment.

The moral revolution of temperance effected by the preaching of the Rev. Mr. Mathew, exhibited, in a remarkable manner, some of the good and of the less favourable qualities of the Irish character. It was easy to foresee, that a pledge given, for the most part, without inquiry or reflection, and in many instances without any necessity whatever, but merely from a gregarious impulse, would not be strictly observed, when the exaltation of the moment had subsided. Thus it has fallen out; the reaction has set in extensively, and it has led, in numerous instances, to excess to which the renegade votaries of sobriety had not been originally addicted. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that thousands of confirmed drunkards were rescued from their vicious and destructive habits, and permanently restored to their families, and to society, by the benevolent enthusiasm of Mr. Mathew. Had the experiment been conducted on more moderate principles, it might have been more consonant to religion and to reason; but it would not have

been by any means so popular, or so effective in its operation. It would, however, be unfair to withhold the tribute of our respect from those persevering spirits that, aided by a sense of religious obligation, shrank from a return to the degrading yoke they had thrown off in the hour of irresistible excitement.

It is in the nature and, perhaps, it may be to the disadvantage of the Irish people, that they hold in supreme contempt the petty contrivances of plodding mediocrity. A project may be ridiculous, unjust, or impracticable; but if it is extreme, it is sure to become popular. This disposition, so well suited to the designs of a speculating demagogue, might, in some degree, be made available for higher and nobler purposes. Among the numerous measures proposed for bettering the condition of Ireland, none have approached, in magnitude and consequent effect, the Board of Commissioners for National Education. Not that this institution has been unassailed, for it has been furiously opposed by the bigoted and the perverse of every sect and class; one party denouncing it for not being exclusively under the domination of the Roman Catholic clergy; the other, because the entire of the Scriptures is not made the ordinary school book; as if any man of common sense would suffer his children to read the sacred volume, chapter for chapter, from Genesis to Revelations! But the comprehensiveness and integrity of its principle, and the fair, open and irreproachable manner in which the system of National Education has been conducted by the Commissioners, have borne it successfully through the storm of falsehood, calumny, and vituperation that raged against it. In spite of all, it *has* succeeded. Year after year, its bene-

fits have been extended and admitted. It is difficult to imagine how far malignity and infatuation may prevail; but, hitherto, the plan of National Education stands triumphant—the single measure of British legislation that has conferred substantial, undeniable, and important advantages on the people of Ireland. If, however, other steps of an enlarged and enlightened policy be not taken to ameliorate the physical condition of the people, and afford to them the opportunities of earning their subsistence honestly, what can education bestow, but a keener sense of their privations and their wrongs? Knowledge is power; but power in the hands of a population, driven frantic by despair and want, is not likely to advance the general welfare, or to contribute to the ease and satisfaction of those to whom the management of State affairs may be committed. It is in vain that the calamity stricken people are exhorted to bestir themselves, and work out their own regeneration. They have neither the spirit nor the means for such an attempt. The one is broken, the other wasted and destroyed. Ireland does not ask to be carried on the shoulders of her imperious sister, but merely to be raised on her own feet. For this great end, the dull maxims of the lecture-room will not avail; the cold and narrow doctrines of political economy must be set aside: we have to deal with fearful realities, which must be treated conformably to plain good sense and experience of human nature, not by the rule and measure of abstract and fanciful theories. It is true, however, that although the broad principles of humanity and justice are everywhere, and at all times, the same; yet, in the practical application of them, we should be guided by the habits and

relative circumstances of those whom we intend to serve. Ireland wants but a firm and friendly hand to lift her from the gulf of wretched helplessness into which she has been flung by a long series of disasters, by her own guilt and recklessness; and, most of all, by the oppression, the injustice, the inveterate misrule of England.

CHAPTER II.

POTATO FAILURE—REMEDIAL MEASURES—POOR-LAWS.

The general failure of the potato crop all through Ireland appears to have been one of those inscrutable dispensations of Divine Providence which, if taken in a spirit of becoming submission, we may humbly hope will tend to our improvement and ultimate advantage. The Almighty is merciful in his judgment; he chastens while he punishes his erring creatures; but the mischief that is caused by the perverseness or folly of our fellow-mortals is of a malignant and, for the most part, an incurable nature. The hand of man takes up the scourge of Heaven, and knows not how to alleviate, or when to lay it aside.

In particular districts of Ireland, a deficiency of food during some months of each year seems to have been of ordinary occurrence, and large sums were from time to collected in England, as well as at home, for the relief of the famishing population in the western counties.* A

* Mr. Peel, *September*, 1817.—"There can be but one opinion upon the extent and severity of the distress which has been suffered for some time past. It has been, generally speaking, submitted to with a degree of forbearance and fortitude very creditable to that numerous body who have been exposed to it. I fear that *it would be vain to expect any immediate or general remedy* of the evil, which results from the want of employment for a vast population."

Mr. Secretary Grant, *May*, 1822.—"Your lordship will have observed that the distress of the south and south-west of Ireland has excited the

partial loss of the potato having produced such disastrous results, it must have been obvious to a foresightful statesman how alarming the consequence would be of the total destruction of that species of food on which three-fourths of the nation entirely depended for their subsistence. No preventive or preservative measures were thought of; the blow came at last—sudden, complete, overwhelming!

To comprehend the full extent of the calamity, it is necessary to reflect how intimately and universally the culture of this root was connected with the habits and the wants of the Irish people. Of easy tillage and abundant return, it gave to the poorer classes a cheering confidence in a continued supply of humble but nutritious fare for themselves, with the means of fattening a pig or two to satisfy the rent—often excessive—of their narrow holdings. To the wealthier farmer it was ever the staple food of his household, as well as excellent fodder for his cattle, and with all ranks it was a common and deservedly favourite vegetable. Moreover, the potato was the currency in which the wages of labour were paid in the rural districts. Although this esculent, naturally of delicate and uncertain growth, had been frequently affected by frost and other atmospheric influences, yet hitherto its partial failure, though always attended by more or

warmest sympathy in this country; we hear of meetings in all parts. Our London subscriptions amounted this day to £26,000, and they are increasing."

Mr. Peel, *September*, 1826.—"I regret to learn that you take so gloomy a view of the prospects of Ireland with regard to the employment and subsistence of the people. The accounts transmitted to me are far from being satisfactory, but they certainly are not so extremely unfavourable as those which appear to have reached your lordship."—*Recollections of Lord Cloncurry.*

less of suffering to small holders, was in a great measure compensated from other resources; the people struggled through in one way or another, and the country remained pretty much in its usual position.

In the year 1846, the potatoes came up well, and flourished in more than wonted luxuriance. The farmer, at the close of his day's work, surveyed his blooming and fragrant fields, rejoicing in the promised abundance. The morning came, and with it the destruction of his hopes, for all was withered, blackened, and offensive. It would be vain to attempt inquiry into the nature of this fearful blight in its various types and degrees of intensity. Amidst all the investigation that has taken place, and the numerous remedies or preservatives that have been put forward, the disease has steadily kept its course, setting calculation and ingenuity at defiance, but evidently changing the form and abating the virulence of its attacks; and allowing for the highly exaggerated reports of the present year, a reasonable hope may be indulged that its baneful influence is decidedly on the decline.

It being evident, however, from the first, that some districts were less affected, and that some were better able than others to contend with the disaster, great caution was required in the manner of bestowing aid where it was necessary, as well as to avoid raising a clamour where assistance was not needed, or where a less amount of it would have sufficed. On the calm and careful consideration of this point it depended whether the munificence of parliament were to have a beneficial or an injurious effect. At this critical period, the Whig ministers, who had been dismissed in the year 1841, were pitched back into office by the astounding tergiversation of Sir R. Peel, and the consequent discomfiture of the

powerful party by whose gallant and confiding support he had been raised to the head of affairs. The position of the new ministry was felt to be one of great peril and difficulty, and never did any government meet with readier indulgence or more efficient support. Although the proofs of their incompetence became more glaring from day to day, their remedial measures were not opposed, or even censured. In the exigency of the moment, perhaps, there might have been an excess of forbearance towards ministers on the part of their political antagonists, arising from a double feeling of the magnitude of the danger, and the notorious dearth of adequate intellectual resources in those who had incurred such a heavy responsibleness.

A series of mischievous blunders followed in rapid succession. Ministers seemed determined to reject every proposal that contained a particle of sober sense or discretion, and to adopt nothing that was not chimerical and absurd. The first act of the new administration was to proclaim "free trade" in fire-arms, of which the lower classes already possessed a stock far more ample than was consistent with the peace of society. Facilities for murder were granted as a bait for such popularity as might be thus obtained. The necessary consequence was, the enactment, shortly after, of a far more stringent Arms Bill than any of those previously in existence.

The potato famine was now to be encountered, and it is scarcely possible to give a correct idea of the injury created by the first crude remedial measure, dashed off almost at random, and cobbled into inextricable confusion by the efforts of the Irish Executive to reduce it to practice. This was the memorable mock labour-scheme, with its swarms of inspectors, pay-clerks, overseers, and

plunderers of every degree, employed to carry out the matchless absurdity of useless or destructive works. It was sending a cloud of locusts to repair the damages of blight. The magistrates, landowners, and landholders were required to meet at public sessions, there to mortgage their property to Government for the execution of works which they could neither select nor control. If they hesitated to sanction the most wasteful and ridiculous presentments, the matter was soon decided by threats from "the friends of the people," or at a pinch, by the bludgeons of mobs panting for a share of the public plunder. Hundreds of pounds were voted for repairs to lanes leading only to farm-houses. It signified little whether the pressure of want was greater or less; the thirst of spoil raged everywhere alike. This truly "Communist" measure enabled the poor of every description to put their hands deeply into the pockets of the affluent; the *lure* of high wages, with scarcely any labour, was irresistible, and, for a *space*, all other occupation was abandoned. Females also, of all ages, were admitted to those profligate gangs, with whom the most innocent recreation was ball-practice at a hat set up on the top of a spade-handle. Throughout the greater part of Ireland there was not the shadow of a pretext for such a wanton and detrimental expenditure—such a widely demoralising invitation to pillage, on the part of Government. It bore all the marks of extreme fatuity and prostration of mind. Wherever the cry of famine was raised, woe to him who presumed to question it. On this occasion, as on many others, it was observable that they who suffered most made least complaint. *They* endured patiently, and sank almost without a murmur.

There are parts of Ireland in which starvation has be-

come chronical—where uninterrupted misery broods over dreary and neglected wastes. When such desolation has been permitted to establish itself, nothing can avail for the dire necessities of the moment, but downright alms. This is but the fitting expiation of most culpable negligence on their part, whose paramount duty it was to have traced out the very root of the evil, and administered an effectual remedy. For what else is all government ordained, but for the safety and well-being of the governed? Surely not for the mere disposal of patronage, and the paltry management of parties.

No one would be justified in aspersing the intentions of her Majesty's Ministers; it is generally admitted that they meant well; but, it is equally undeniable, that they have proved themselves to be quite unequal to the duty they so rashly undertook. The first and most obvious mode of proceeding was, by every means, to keep down the price of provisions. Our political philosophers, too refined to go directly to the point, after the antiquated practice of common sense, resolved not to interfere *where the pressure lay.* At that awful hour, they refused to stand between avarice and want. In their zeal for the rights of money, they entirely forgot the rights of humanity, and the duties of legislators. In the face of the increasing ravages of famine, they committed the charge of providing food for the people to the rapacity of private speculation. Calamities of a nearly similar nature have befallen mankind in various ages; but never before did it occur to rulers in any country to consider a period of such affliction as a suitable season to indulge in working out abstract theories and paradoxical experiments.

In compliance with the profound wisdom of the day, no embargo was laid on provisions in our ports, as the

great Lord Chatham had done under like circumstances, with complete success, in the early part of the reign of George the Third. The famishing multitudes were scientifically consigned to the mercies of usurers and monopolists, whose cupidity, goaded to madness by the prospect of unbounded gain, thought only of the means by which they might screw up prices to their utmost attainable height! By a just judgment of heaven, ruin overtook a great number of those speculators in the misery of their fellow-men.

A clear and vigorous mind would have provided food for those who were utterly unable to procure it, and placed a plentiful, well-regulated market within reach of all who could find employment.

When speculators in the public calamity inquired of the Premier, whether he would interfere to hinder their "grinding the faces of the poor," according to the "sound, general principles" of political economy, a statesman of the olden time would probably have replied something to the following effect:—"If you act fairly by your countrymen in this grave emergency, I will not interfere; but if you attempt to wring immoderate profits from a starving people, and to speculate in their hard necessity, it will become my duty to interpose between you and your intended victims. You shall not be permitted to traffic in hunger, in disease, and death; content yourselves with a fair and reasonable profit; keep the markets abundantly supplied, and you shall experience not only no opposition on our part, but you shall receive every aid and encouragement that we can afford." If this proposition had been rejected, then should the vast resources with which England has been blessed have been brought into full exertion, to save and shelter a nation with whose fate her

own is inseparably linked, for better or for worse. Thus might the severity of the visitation have been in a great degree mitigated, while advantage might have been taken of the hour of humiliation and suffering to raise the tone of public morals, to introduce habits of subordination and regularity, and to lay the permanent groundwork of a wiser and better system.

All this, however, was either beyond the comprehension, or beneath the notice of our rulers. It never entered into their philosophy. Amidst professions of unbounded sympathy, not altogether free from contempt, they elaborated a law which neither relieved the actual want of the Irish people, nor afforded the means of future improvement; it aggravated their defects, and threw a shade over their natural good qualities.

The remedial measures broke down at every step. In vain did my Lord Besborough explain, and Mr. Labouchere write. Nobody was the wiser. The mystery remained, the confusion and the distress increased; and, amidst the most lavish expenditure, it is said that half a million of human beings perished from absolute starvation. Scenes of horror were now exposed, not to be described, not to be credited, even among the most barbarous inhabitants of the earth. In the frenzy of hunger, putrid animals, noxious weeds, and, in some instances, human bodies cast on the shore, were greedily devoured. Death in its most appalling form was everywhere. Whole families, swept away by fever or by destitution, remained unburied in their loathsome hovels.

Yet, our rulers were neither inert nor parsimonious, but their exertions were ill-directed, and their scornful alms corruptive. With all their professions of philosophical non-interference, they *did* interfere directly,

largely, fatally, with the labour-market. They deranged all the operations of industry, they squandered on wilful, sturdy idleness, the funds that should have been sacredly reserved for the destitute and deserving poor; they filled the minds of the working-classes with all sorts of wild and dangerous illusions, and raised a formidable barrier to the resumption of those agricultural labours on which the future subsistence of the people almost entirely depended. The evil became so monstrous and insufferable, that a sudden stop was put to the waste labour scheme, leaving many of the principal roads through the country broken up and impassible. A gleam of a more rational system appeared in the advancement of funds for the purchase of food, to be distributed under the control of local committees. This principle, which ought to have been taken as the basis of a poor-law for the greater part of Ireland, was worked with comparative ease and real advantage. It would have been of readier and more useful application, were it not for a number of ridiculous, harassing, and often impracticable regulations, that were issued weekly from some restless spirit at head-quarters. Nevertheless, it was a vast improvement. A relief committee, over which I presided, had in its care a district where several thousand pounds had been extorted by popular clamour during the delirium of unprofitable works. Notwithstanding the excited and unreasonable expectations which we had to encounter, two hundred pounds perfectly supplied the real wants of the poor from March until August; and when public relief ceased, a small voluntary subscription from the members of the committee, sufficed for the support of the needy until the middle of the following December. It is true that this occurred in a county better off in some respects

than many others, but which was on the verge of becoming as distressed, as idle, and more turbulent, than those on whom the calamity had fallen with its utmost rigour.

To this succeeded the extension of the poor-law to indiscriminate out-door relief—another hasty and improvident measure, and, *as connected with the existing law*, so open to abuse, so comprehensively wasteful, that complete insolvency followed close on its introduction into the more distressed unions, which were converted by it into one mass of hopeless pauperism. The stoutest hearts were now daunted, and the few who had hitherto borne up manfully against the evils that surrounded them, gave way beneath the intolerable burthen of poor-rates, augmenting as the means of paying them diminished. This fatal addition to an originally bad poor-law, operated as a positive discouragement to industry, and a premium on idleness and impudent extortion. It may be designated the Magna Charta of infamous pauperism—the triumph of imposition and laziness over industry and order. It should be remembered that all this occurred in an afflicted and already exhausted country, and one of all others where it was imperative on Government to have thrown its weight, and employed all its means to have given a powerful impulse in the very opposite direction.

When the Whig leaders grasped at rule so justly forfeited by the disciple of Cobden, they could not have been altogether ignorant of the arduous nature of the task before them. The fallen minister himself threw a parting brand on the pile. Six months previously, Lord John Russell had declared his inability to form an administration: yet, when matters had become far more involved and perilous, the noble Lord accepted office

without delay or scruple, and with his colleagues dashed along in their wild career of experiment, until they converted Ireland into a sort of moral and political "caput mortuum." Their inconsiderate and unsparing edicts have dragged down the industrious and the provident to hopeless destitution. The living were linked to the dead; the system was rigidly enforced while a shilling remained to the industrious and well-disposed portion of the community; as if the object to be attained were the reduction of all to a common level of beggary and demoralization.

In two provinces, at least, there were, until lately, manifest signs of progressive civilization and comfort; there was good reason to hope that the force of example would have made some way in extending the range of improvement generally. All such expectation is at an end, and Leinster and Ulster are sinking fast to the level of Munster and Connaught.

Wherever destitution was excessive, the poor-law has been a failure, and everywhere it has been a nuisance. It has not only augmented the amount of pauperism, but it has swept away every vestige of decency and honest independence. Men who, but a short time since, would have shrunk from a mean or fraudulent action, now rush forward to clutch a share of the public spoil—the last resource of degradation and despair. The Irish poor-law besides being faulty in principle, is totally unsuited to the circumstances and disposition of the people. A compulsory provision for the poor is applicable only to the ordinary necessities or vicissitudes of an orderly and prosperous society. It never should be contemplated as a provision for the people at large; for, if all are to be

supported, who are to be the supporters? Yet, as such it was inflicted by a bewildered ministry on the broken fortunes of a sinking nation. The object of our modern poor-law appears to be in the first place to stigmatize all poverty as culpable and disgraceful. "Magnum pauperies opprobrium" should be inscribed over the doors of these pauper palaces. This idea is certainly not conformable to the doctrine of Christianity; but, in a solely political point of view, it can hardly be considered just or expedient to make these unhappy beings eat the bread of insult, and to brand with marks of reprobation, unmerited and unoffending want. On the profligate and the hardened such treatment can produce no good effect whatever.

There is another and a formidable objection to the shutting up of great numbers of our fellow-citizens, to be maintained without labour on their part, at the public expense. A nation of paupers thus grows up within a nation, but unconnected with it by the usual feelings and ties of social life—a vast multitude who eat without thankfulness the food derived not from self-elevating industry, but which is exacted by law from impoverished and grudging rate-payers. As an adjunct of this ill-conditioned poor-law, I cannot omit the expression of my disgust at the inhuman practice that prevails in large towns, of seizing mendicants and confining them for twenty-four hours without food, fire, or straw to lie on.

One only benefit may accrue to the poor of Ireland from the operation of workhouse discipline. In some of the better administered and solvent unions, it is just possible that a taste for cleanly and regular habits may be acquired; but it must be recollected that the indige-

nous Irish pauper is mortally averse to both, and that relapse is almost inevitable, when the freedom of filth is restored. The preliminary purification of soap-and-water is the *peine forte et dure*—the real workhouse test in Ireland.

There are so many conflicting reports as to the state of morals, discipline, and education in these establishments, that it would be extremely difficult to come at the exact truth. But, whatever the amount of moral discipline may be, there can be little doubt that, in case of a serious revolutionary outbreak, a formidable body of able, well-fed, ardent Socialists would forthwith issue out of those receptacles of pampered idleness in every direction. Thus far, I have taken into consideration only those poor-houses where the system works with comparative efficacy and smoothness; with a copious staff of well-paid officers and a strong detachment of police always at hand; where all the comforts, and some of the luxuries of living, are provided in great abundance, at the cost of the hard working farmer, for poor mortals whose most extravagant desires never went beyond clean straw for a bed, with plenty of potatoes and sour milk. In those fearful districts where desolation reigns paramount, the recorded statements of the horrors that occur daily in the workhouses and hospitals prove, beyond all doubt, that the existing system of poor-laws, as applied to extreme distress, is not a remedy, but an aggravation of evil.

The next in order of the remedial measures of Government was "the rate-in-aid," to be levied all over Ireland, including, of course, those wasted and insolvent unions, for whose benefit the subsidy was to be raised.

As might have been expected, so iniquitous an impost met with considerable opposition. It evidently tended to exhaust whatever might remain of comparative competence, without the faintest prospect of improving the condition of the ruined districts. It struck down all security for the future, and crushed the last lingering hope of the already overburthened farmer.

A great national disaster should be encountered by the vigorous application of the national resources, not frittered away in absurdities, or given up to be pillaged by subalterns, but skilfully and honestly directed to the all-important end of relief. Care should have been taken to provide useful and reproductive employment for every man able and willing to work, so that he might fairly earn, by his day's labour, wages sufficient to supply him with the necessaries of existence. The rate-in-aid was carried by the same influence that rejected the wise and beneficent project of Lord George Bentinck, to employ the starving Irish in constructing extensive railways—that ill-omened influence which a Whig ministry continues to exercise over Irish representatives, little to their own credit, and still less to the advantage of their most unfortunate country.

It was decreed to seek a remedy for ruin out of the wreck of the ruined!

It has been already observed, that the poor-laws were framed in an utilitarian and unchristian spirit. They stigmatize poverty as an offence against society, at the same time that they perpetuate pauperism, by effacing every vestige of honest shame and self-reliance. It may be said, what is to be done with the starving multitudes on the over-populated estates? For the present, I shall

merely hint, that it is for those to devise a remedy who freely undertook the arduous task; but, under any circumstances, it should not be unjustly attempted to relieve their wants, by the destruction of those resident landlords, who preferred their duties to their inclinations; or, by grinding down their hitherto contented and thriving tenants to the miserable condition of the poor wretches, who encumber the neglected or mismanaged properties. Again, what is to become of the entire population, when, as must happen if the present system be continued, all property shall be wasted away, and the level of destitution be completed? Surely, it would be wiser to preserve and foster what yet survives of struggling independence; by timely, well-disposed assistance, to uphold the fallen; and boldly, liberally to mitigate the distress where it has grown to be intolerable, and passed beyond the reach of ordinary resources. The conceits and crotchets of political economists have produced nothing but mischief; it is not to be endured, that the welfare and safety of a nation should be placed in hazard for the glory and renown of the lecture-room. Even while I write, the danger accumulates and draws nearer every day. The wealthy and intelligent portion of our farmers are emigrating, by thousands in each week, with their activity, their capital, their agricultural skill, in search of that security and fair return for outlay in foreign lands, which the obstinate fatuity of our rulers denies them at home. The hour will come—it may even be at hand—when England will mourn, in unavailing tears of blood, the fatal policy that drove those gallant spirits, and those stalwart arms, from the country of which they should have been the pride and the protec-

tion. In many places, where happier days had seen the heath driven out by persevering toil, the teeming crops have disappeared, and the dull, rude garb of nature is returning fast; not, as frequently happens in America, from the rapid sweep of improvement pressing onward to reclaim new regions, and leaving the traces of past labour to be overgrown by the wild luxuriance of native vegetation; but, alas! from ruined means, from despair, and a diminished people.

Ministers and their adherents are loud in their appeals to Irish landlords to employ the labouring poor; it might, however, puzzle the most profound political economist in the cabinet—for instance, the learned President of the Board of Trade; yea, even the great Chancellor of the Exchequer himself—to discover where that persecuted and pillaged class were to find remuneration for all this restorative labour. It can be considered only as an unseasonable jest, when the unhappy Irish are assured that Ministers are prepared to receive any remedial suggestions that they may think fit to offer. Yes, prepared they are indeed; for to obtain the slightest chance of attention on the part of our State philosophers, the propositions must be in strict accordance with their "sound general principles." In other words, the remedy to be acceptable, must be identical with the disease; it may not have even the fashionable merit of counter-irritation. Of course, the confidential advisers of the Crown would gladly adopt any plan that would cause their absurd, contradictory, and vexatious theories to work smoothly and satisfactorily for the public, and creditably for their own fame—a vain and fallacious imagination, that no stretch of human ingenuity could accomplish.

The copious sterility of ministerial faculties, in dealing with Irish disasters, is deserving of some notice. The sum of their remedial policy has this extent—a large amount of money mischievously squandered ; and, after that, nothing but repeated aggravations of burthens already unproductive, from being excessive and insupportable.

It may be fairly objected, that it is far easier to discover faults in what is past, than to point out a safer and more eligible mode of proceeding for the time to come. I shall endeavour to do so, premising, that in my humble attempt to suggest an approach to some improvement on the mode of dealing with Irish pauperism, it is indispensably necessary regard should be had to the consequences of the mistaken system which has hitherto been pursued.

The original introduction of the poor-law into Ireland was a hasty, ill-considered measure. It was founded on a very imperfect, superficial knowledge of the circumstances, wants, and social habits of the Irish people. The calculations by which it was to be supported were, in many respects, erroneous, and the result has been almost everywhere the reverse of what had been predicted.* There can be no doubt that the time had arrived when some provision ought to have been made for certain classes of the poor in Ireland ; the amount, the claims, and the mode of distribution should have been regulated with care and circumspection. The experiment should have been commenced on a moderate scale, and gradually accommodated to the real wants of the

* See Appendix A.

poor, and the means of supply in the country at large. Instead of this, the modern English poor-law was at once imposed, with all its cumbrous and expensive machinery; its huge beggar barracks; its endless host of salaried officials; its compulsory idleness; its contracts for luxuries; and its burthens of every kind, which have made even the enormous opulence of England stagger beneath their weight. How could such an institution act otherwise than mischievously in a country like Ireland?

With a just, but not an oppressive, sense of the difficulty, I venture to proceed. In the first place, a clear distinction should be drawn between those districts that are distressed beyond the reach of local aid, and those where a well-administered supply of moderate relief would effectually meet every case of real destitution. In the latter, I should propose that committees be formed in each electoral division, as now constituted, or in parishes, if it should be found more advisable, with one paid officer, a clerk at a moderate salary, to inquire, at such intervals as might be thought expedient, into the condition of the poor in their district, pretty much in the manner that the "meal-committees" were appointed and acted, in the summer of 1847. They should be authorised to give relief according to the necessity of each case, which would be perfectly well known to *them*, and to strike a rate sufficient for that purpose. I have already stated my opinion, that out-door relief, *in connexion with the machinery of the actual poor-law*, was merely an extension and aggravation of burthens and abuses. But, long experience has convinced me that relief, judiciously distributed under the inspection of a local committee, would, for the

greater part of Leinster and Ulster, be abundantly sufficient, and beyond all comparison, less expensive. Many poor families, with a little assistance given at a proper time, and always after due inquiry, would contrive to make out a very tolerable existence: certainly not with the best port wine, refined sugar, spices, and prime joints of meat, as advertised for in workhouse contracts, but still with enough of coarse but wholesome food, made sweeter by a feeling of home.* The poor-law makes total idleness on the part of every member of a family the condition, *sine qua non*, of admission to the enjoyment of the dainties above-mentioned, with a felon's dress, and the confinement of a jail.

The present poor-law prisons, with all their attendant nuisances, might, in most cases, be safely abolished in six months; retaining, of course, a district asylum for the destitute, aged, and infirm. In this case the state of the poor should be under the general inspection of an officer appointed for each province, who should furnish a report to Government every three months. The Chief Governor of Ireland should be authorised to extend the powers of the local committees under any extraordinary pressure; to dismiss any member of the committee on the report of the Inspector, or on petition from the majority of the rate-payers; and also, in case of palpable neglect or misconduct, to suspend the functions of the committee altogether, and to appoint an administrator during pleasure. As the events of late years have had the effect of accumulating numbers of destitute persons in towns, it would be unjust, as well as absolutely ruinous, to leave

* See Appendix B.

the entire burthen of their support on the townsmen. It would be, therefore, expedient, with all due restrictions and facilities for detecting abuse, that whenever the rate in towns exceeded a fixed percentage, the excess should be provided for either by a county rate or a provincial one.

In the crowded and wasted districts of the west and south-west of Ireland, another and a more active system should be adopted. The unemployed population should at once be set to work in reclaiming waste lands, and bringing them, as much as possible, into a profitable state. If there be truth in any proposition, it is in this, that reclaimable land may be rendered more or less valuable by judicious treatment. There would be something available, at least, in the end; as the work proceeded there would be a return; and, incomparably above all considerations, the poor would be usefully, wholesomely employed; and thousands of our fellow-Christians would no longer be left to perish for want on the high roads, or driven to rot in the pestilence and filth of overcrowded workhouses.

I know that I shall be met here by "sound general principles," and I confess I have neither the patience nor the courage to attempt a reply to such an objection under such circumstances. From the infatuation of human self-conceit there is but one appeal: it has been made, fearfully made to heaven, in the agony of an expiring people, and we may not doubt that it will be heard.

Hundreds of thousands have perished miserably, in sufferings that cannot be described, on the battle-field of famine and disease. The fact is notorious, horribly scandalously true. Again, I ask, what is the use or the

value of civil government, if, neglecting its paramount duties, or incompetent to discharge them, its energies, destined to far nobler purposes, are yearly consumed and wasted in the despicable effort to tide over the season of parliamentary danger, leaving a long interval of inglorious security to Ministers, and of increasing danger and misery to the people? In their dogged adherence to fanciful theories, and their wilful blindness to the irresistible force of circumstances, our rulers seem to have satisfied themselves that great calamities, and a threatened break-up of social relations, can be encountered by a tissue of petty contrivances and fourth-rate make-shifts; or that chance may benevolently operate to undo what ignorance and perverseness have done.

There has been enough, and more than enough, of unheeded complaint and remonstrance. Events are coming, and events will bring forth the men.

CHAPTER III.

CURRENCY—FREE TRADE—CHEAPNESS.

I WOULD willingly avoid the trite and distasteful subject of this chapter, if it were feasible to treat of the dismal condition of Ireland, without reference to those measures which have filled to overflowing the cup of her misery and degradation, and which have shaken to the centre the principal interests even of haughty and prosperous England. This great empire has been given up to the experiments of grasping and self-sufficient theorists, for a period of more than thirty years. Years they have been of constantly returning distress and alarm to all except stock-jobbers, usurers, and great capitalists, who rejoiced and revelled in the plunder of every other class. Time after time, we were assured from authority that we had seen the worst; each crashing convulsion was declared to be positively the last, and that fresh precautions had been taken to insure the return of general and permanent prosperity. The ponderous evil was permitted to hold on its destructive course; the undaunted empiric still prescribed, and still, in defiance of repeated and convincing experience, Parliament concurred, and the people submitted.

A more audacious or more successful attack on the morals and the well-being of society never was made, than by the currency system of the late Sir Robert Peel.

It is the more dangerous and difficult to expose, from its designedly intricate agency, and the idea that prevails of its extremely dry and abstruse nature. Yet, when stripped of the technical terms, and the metaphysical subtleties with which its supporters love to invest their doctrines, for their special purposes, a knowledge of the subject can be obtained with less trouble than is every day bestowed on matters of greatly subordinate importance.

It is worth while to consider and trace the origin and progress of this mischievous and extraordinary delusion through its various degrees of dazzling novelty, gratified avarice, and irritated self-conceit.

The first stage was that of brilliant discovery, of courted inquiry, of bland persuasion, and of the interminable reveries of Horner, Huskisson, and Ricardo. It was indeed conceded by the Bullionists, that a depreciation of property to the amount of some four or five per cent.* might take place from a return to cash payments, which, however, they assured an ignorant and credulous public would be more than compensated by the increased security, the *steadiness*, and the *unassailable solidity* of all our commercial transactions. The measure was carried and the havoc began. Then came the season of angry refusal to investigate further; of blustering sarcasm and barefaced ribaldry. They who prayed for inquiry were asked

* Mr. Ricardo afterwards admitted that the increased value of money, and of course the depreciation of property, amounted to thirty per cent. He might have gone near to the truth by doubling it. But why should the debtor interest and the working classes be robbed, to any extent, however trifling, for the exclusive benefit of loan-mongers, usurers, and great capitalists?

if they wanted to rob their creditors. "If you must cheat, go cheat abroad, do not try to pilfer at home."* Whereas, in truth, they did not seek to rob any one, but merely to have an end put to the robbery so long and so impudently perpetrated on themselves, by the dishonest and pernicious crotchets of the "sound and wholesome" currency-mongers.

The loss to the industrious classes was clearly proved to be at least fifty per cent.; the weight of taxation became intolerable, and the country reeled beneath the doubled burthen of public and private debt, contracted originally in a currency not worth more than half of that in which it *had been made* payable. Destruction of property and confiscation now took place rapidly, and to an extent surpassing that of political revolutions; exceeding in amount the cost of that glorious struggle which preserved England from becoming a province of France.

That great statesman, William Pitt, seeing that the levy of war taxes, as well as the increased commercial relations of Great Britain, required that the circulating medium should be augmented, and placed beyond the reach of sudden contraction, to which it was exposed by the ancient metallic standard, boldly released the Bank of England from the obligation of paying its notes in gold on demand. For seventeen years, during which cash payments were suspended, not only were the expenses of an arduous warfare amply sustained, but the country generally reached a point of wealth and contentment unexampled before, and which continued progressive up to the time when the new-fangled doctrine of

* Verbatim, as spoken in the House of Commons.

"sound and wholesome" currency came into operation. It was in vain that the merchants, the bankers, and traders of the metropolis, men who, from practical acquaintance with commercial and monetary affairs, were best qualified to give a valid opinion on the subject, petitioned both Houses of Parliament against the Bill of 1819, stating their conviction that it would cause "a forced and precipitate contraction of the circulating medium of the country, tending to embarrass trade and to injure public credit, agriculture, manufactures, and commerce."

The Directors of the Bank of England also remonstrated strongly against the measure, which they pronounced "likely to compromise the universal interests of the empire, in all the relations of agriculture, commerce, and revenue;" and, "as taking away from the Bank anything like a discretionary consideration of the necessities and distresses of the commercial world." The councils of the State were inaccessible to such arguments, the law was passed, and the work of destruction began.

In the year 1821, agricultural distress became so prevalent and alarming, that a committee to inquire into the subject was appointed by the House of Commons.

The evidence given before that Committee, by some of the most intelligent landholders from various counties, represents the farming population as suffering under great depression and misery. It should be remembered, too, that this occurred when high protecting duties were in force.

Rents were paid out of capital, for profits were not to be made; and, in some instances, the produce of the farm barely afforded the amount of the poor-rate. The

graziers suffered as severely as the corn-growers; the price of animal food was extremely low. The evidence of a Berkshire farmer is deserving of particular notice. "There have been several failures in my neighbourhood; and some who have it in their power are now leaving their farms, and I believe that it is only the hope of some relief being granted that at this time prevents hundreds from leaving their farms. In fact, such has lately been the general distress, that, during the numerous conversations I have had with the different farmers in my neighbourhood, I have never met with one but has acknowledged, when asked on the subject, that his losses on the crop of 1819 amounted to as much as his rental; and it is my firm opinion that, if the whole of the occupiers of land in Berkshire were examined on the subject, nineteen out of twenty would declare this fact. A farmer, of forty years' standing, has lately been distressed for rent; another is now upon the parish, who, but a little time ago, was worth two thousand pounds: and hundreds, with very large families, are on the brink of ruin, and are obliged to mortgage the next crop of corn before they can gather it in."

Such was the immediate effect, on the landed interest, of this iniquitous and offensive enactment, by which the price of every description of produce was forcibly beaten down, and the value of every debt was raised from a third to a half above that of the original contract. There were, it is true, occasional gleams of prosperity, when the force of circumstances effected a virtual suspension of its functions: but, as prices rose to a remunerating level, by the increased issue of bank notes, the foreign exchanges turned against England, and the capitalists at once set to

work to draw the gold out of the Bank of England for exportation. Hence arose the *post prosperity* panic of 1825–6. "The gold of the Bank was drained to within a very few thousand pounds."—"A certain Saturday night closed with *nothing worth mentioning remaining*." At this moment of alarm and dismay, when the solvency of the bank hung by a slender thread, the general ruin and confusion were averted by the accidental discovery of a million-and-a-half of the disgraced and prohibited one-pound notes. They were sent into circulation, and the nation was saved from bankruptcy, and a state of barter, to which it had been exposed by the consequences of this *precious* "sound and wholesome" currency. Our rulers, as usual, were not to be taught, and the destructive system was resumed with all convenient despatch. Silver, which as a precious metal, is, conjointly with gold, a standard of value in all civilized states, was abolished as a legal tender in England,* so that where the most extensive commercial dealings in the world were to be carried on, where the public debt amounted to a sum almost incredible, monetary principles were adopted restricting, within the narrowest limits, the operations of mercantile credit, and sending suspicion, uncertainty, and apprehension into the best conducted and most solvent establishments. All that was dear and valuable to the community was sacrificed to the integrity of Sir Robert Peel's Bill, and the

* This alone, according to some financial authorities, amounts to a difference of twenty-five per cent. on the five hundred millions of public debt contracted during the war. "The raiment, food, labour, blood, bones, and sinews of the mass of British subjects being thus drawn from them by laws to enrich the monied capitalists, placemen, and annuitants!"—the very drones of the national hive.

sacred purity of his preposterous standard. This absurd standard has made England the jest and the fable of the civilized world. Foreign nations have profited by our foolish experiments, without, however, attempting to follow them. It would have been quite as fair and rational to have affixed an ounce of gold to a quarter of wheat, as to £3 17s. 10½d. of our money. And after all this boasted fixity, the fluctuations in the standard of value have been, and will continue to be, frequent and considerable.

Then we were asked, with a self-complacent smile of condescending arrogance, "What is a pound?" Why, Sir Oracle, it is a medium of representative value employed to facilitate the interchange of commodities, worth precisely what it can command, and should be payable by those who issued it, in the market-price of gold or silver, neither more nor less.

It would seem that Providence, which frequently "makes foolish the wisdom of man," is about to defeat this inhuman scheme of avarice by the daily discoveries of gold to an amount that will not only dispose of the "purity of the standard" that has created so much human misery, but will, in releasing industry from its oppression, turn back the evil on the heads of its worthless contrivers. Thus we have seen that high protecting duties are not always a security for remunerating prices to the farmer, but in every instance where the circulating medium was contracted, distress ensued, and with its extension prosperity returned. We have been repeatedly told that the currency question is a decided case, that it is fixed and irrevocable. For an accomplished fact, the "vital principle" has taken a vast deal of propping and patching; it

has come to a dead lock more than once, and never can resist the pressure of those difficulties which it has a tendency to create. Under this most "sound and wholesome" system, we have had a commercial crisis in 1826, relieved by a copious issue of Bank notes; another crisis in 1837, when the Bank was saved by borrowing gold from the Bank of France; and a crisis in 1847, arrested by a suspension of the renowned Charter* which, as we were assured by its distinguished author, and his ardent disciple, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, "would prevent, as far as human legislation could do so, the recurrence of the fearful monetary convulsions which took place between the settlement of 1819 and the year 1841." The effect of "human legislation" in this instance was, to render insolvent several hundred respectable mercantile houses, which, under a rational and equitable monetary system, would have continued perfectly solvent. By this celebrated effort of "human legislation," the Bank of England was authorized to issue fourteen millions not reposing on a metallic basis. For all the rest of its circulation the Bank must hold a corresponding amount of bullion. A fantastical separation was made between the Banking department and that of Issue, and the Directors were compelled to lay before the public, constantly, a statement of the affairs of the establishment. It must be granted that this was going pretty far for free-trade statesmen professing to abhor interference. The local banks were also restricted in future to a certain fixed average of issue, no matter what the extension of commerce or the wants of the country might require here-

* Passed in 1844.

after. The frequent publication of the Bank returns, innocuous, perhaps, when the money-market was in a tranquil state, would be eminently dangerous in one of those moments of alarm which "human legislation," under the guidance of the "vital principle," has hitherto failed to avert. Public credit should be unshaken and unsuspected even as the wife of Cæsar; but it may be presumed, that a perpetual "delicate investigation" into the conduct of the lady would have contributed little to the lustre or the stability of her virtue.

"I think it is better," said Mr. Rothschild, "that the Bank should not tell the public what gold and what silver they have. A great many people do not read at all; if they hear that there is a great deal of gold fetched from the Bank, they will all run like a flock of sheep, and take their money out." No commercial house could stand the gauntlet of such a scrutiny at all times, without serious inconvenience, if not absolute danger.

To return to the tremendous crash of 1847, the first fruit of the "*complement*" to the Act of 1819. One great establishment went down after another. Deputations were sent with urgent remonstrances to Government. In vain. Her Majesty's Ministers held firm; partly from reluctance to admit the failure of their favourite theory, and still more through fear of offending the Coryphæus of the "sound and wholesome," on whose breath their official existence depended. I have before me a list of leviathan houses, each from fifty thousand pounds to a million and a-half, swept away by this monetary hurricane, nearly all of which would have been not only solvent, but possessed of a large surplus, under a more rational and equitable system. "Their ruin,

and whatever loss their creditors sustained, was entirely caused by the reduction in the circulation of Bank notes." So true it is, that the prosperity of the country is directly affected by the greater or less amount of Bank paper in active circulation. Should it extend to twenty millions, all is tranquil at least; if it continue to increase, improvement will be evident; but if it should be screwed down to sixteen millions, bankruptcy and ruin follow. In the direful emergency of 1847, the Bank of England could do nothing to alleviate the pressure. The Directors had no discretionary power to save even themselves; and it is a notorious fact, that in the month of October in that year, the Banking department was on the point of closing, with more than seven millions in gold utterly unavailable in the Bank of Issue! Such was the security, "*the sound basis*," which the Bank Charter bestowed on the monetary affairs of England. The moment a panic took place in the money-market, which we had been over and over assured could never happen under the new regulations, the grand Banking buttress gave way, involving loss of property to an almost incredible amount. As a preventive measure, then, the law completely failed, and such was the magnitude of the panic caused by its disastrous consequences, that "on one day, the London bankers resolved nearly in a body to withdraw their deposits from the Bank of England."

"Money was not to be procured by merchants of unquestionable solvency on bills at short dates, accepted by Jones, Lloyd and Co., Smyth, Paine and Co., and other bankers equally unexceptionable. Merchants who had received remittances of silver from America and elsewhere, could neither sell it, nor raise money on it."

Still, ministers held out, and appeared resolved to adhere, *per damna, per cædes*, to their "sound basis;" being apparently convinced that nothing but money should be considered as property, and that they who do not possess this qualification, whatever may be the amount of their other possessions, are not entitled to receive assistance to fulfil their engagements. At length, however, the imminent peril of the Bank produced that concession, which the wreck of credit, and the wide destruction of property had failed to elicit. Slowly and sadly, the first Lord of the Treasury succumbed beneath the great political agency of the day, "pressure from without." The Chancellor of the Exchequer affixed his reluctant signature to the memorable document addressed to the Governor of the Bank of England, by which the two branches of the establishment were again mingled, and the *fair weather* "sound basis" was laid in the dust—

> "Multa gemens, casuque animum concussus *amici*,
> O nimium cœlo et pelago confise sereno,
> ——————————— jacebis arena!"

The tardy and ungracious surrender was accompanied by conditions painfully characteristic of the minds from which they sprung. The advances were to be made to distressed merchants, at a rate of interest not lower than *eight per cent.*, and the Crown was to share in the profits of the usurious transaction!!! Such a piece of statesmanship defies all comment. No power of language could do justice to an act of such consummate meanness and absurdity.

Terrified, subdued, but not convinced, or not daring to act on the conviction, no sooner had the alarm sub-

sided, than Ministers "relapsed into error," and the country has been blessed again with the "sound basis," "the vital principle," the divided Bank, all patched up as good as new, waiting for another "crisis," and another suspension.

It is worth remarking, that in Russia, where an extensive paper money has been maintained and guarded from injurious depreciation, none of these financial paroxysms have taken place: on the contrary, upwards of six millions, in gold and silver, were advanced to relieve the monetary difficulties of England and France, by the Emperor Nicholas, in 1847.*—I have been led into this cursory and imperfect sketch of the working of Sir R. Peel's monetary system, by its immediate and detrimental influences on the resources, and the prospects of Ireland, which suffered from it all along, and sank beneath its wasting, destructive progress. I recollect, in the winter of 1819, having a conversation on the subject with the late Sir John Newport, who was a zealous supporter of the bullionist theory. From the first, I had been struck with the injustice of the measure, and the enormous sacrifice of property which it involved. Among other objections, I stated to the veteran financier my apprehension, that one of its earliest re-

* "Whenever the Emperor of Russia may choose to demand this money, he may at any time sell the £6,600,000 of stock, and thus obtain and take back to Russia the £6,600,000 of gold and silver which gave relief. It will be seen that the whole commercial community is thus exposed to be at any time subjected to the calamities which the withdrawal of this amount of bullion must necessarily occasion, if indeed that amount could be supplied without a general convulsion and crisis."—*Currency Records.*

A sort of control which British statesmen of other days would not have tolerated for an hour. Fortunately for his people, the Russian Emperor has eschewed our "sound basis," with all its miserable consequences.

sults would be the insolvency of nearly all the private banks in Ireland. He laughed at my fears, and declared his conviction that the Bill would tend to confirm the solvency of all well-regulated establishments. Before six months, his brother, the head of one of the oldest and deservedly most respectable banking-houses in the kingdom, was insolvent and in his grave. The subject, therefore, cannot be considered foreign to the nature of the task I have undertaken, of seeking to investigate, in all sincerity and anxiety for truth, the causes that have reduced a land so blessed by nature with ample materials for prosperity, and for honourable distinction, to be the disgraced, the blighted, ruined thing it is.

Horace Walpole tells us, that the circulating medium of Ireland, in 1754, was estimated at five hundred thousand pounds. That amount of circulation was proportionally far greater than that of the present day, if we consider the increased number, wants, and taxation of the people. Before the "sound and wholesome" currency came into fashion, the paper circulation of Ireland was between eight and nine millions. It is now about four millions, and the poor-rates amount to two millions annually. On the extended and depreciated currency, all the monied obligations were founded, which have been made extortible—if I may coin the word to express my meaning—in a currency of which the value has been doubled by Act of Parliament. The original error of the philosophers was that they confounded weight and measure with value. The first should be known and determined; the latter has been always subject to fluctuation, and ever will: the effect of the "sound basis" was to render it still more variable and uncertain. Before

quitting the subject, it may be as well that I should meet the objection that is always set forth against a paper currency—its abuse. No one can deny the mischievous effect of an excessive issue of bank-notes. But I cannot admit a manifest abuse as a valid argument against the usefulness, nay the necessity, of a well-regulated currency in bank-notes, for the promotion of industry and the facility of commercial dealings, in an advanced state of civilization. The principle of applying the weight of civil authority, to bring public credit into activity, and make it applicable to the public service, is one of paramount importance.* A well-understood system of paper currency contains in itself a safe regulating principle: when it ceases to have a salutary influence on the action of industry, it is in excess, and should be contracted; on the other hand, when the legitimate operations of commerce are languid, or suspended from want of sufficient pabulum, it should be supplied judiciously, but amply. As matters now are, there is no discretionary power to afford relief; the banks are tied up the moment that their assistance is most urgently necessary—ruin is left to work without impediment.

There seems to exist in the minds of bullionists an idea of something intrinsically sacred, exclusive of all conventional value, in gold fixed at £3 17s. 10½d. the

* "Il suffit que la proportion entre les choses achetées et le *signe qui les achète* ne puisse pas être soudainement et arbitrairement changeé par une multiplication *desordonnée* de ce signe monètaire. Le prix réel et vrai de toutes choses s'établit d'après cette proportion. La loi seule, et une loi probe et prudente peut donc frapper monnaie. Que la loi frappe monnaie en or, en argent, en cuivre, en papier, peu importe, pourvu que la proportion soit religieusement gardée, et que le peuple conserve ainsi confiance dans la sincerité et dans le crédit de ce signe."—*Lamartine.*

ounce. They bowed down before the idol they had set up; they absolutely worshipped this standard. One of the most devoted adherents of this strange divinity, gave it as his deliberate opinion before a committee of the House of Commons, that the sole duty of the Bank of England was to guard the immaculate purity of the standard! There are some who, regarding money as a mere implement of commerce, and the Bank as the means of putting it into motion, are inclined to suspect that all this fine nummular philosophy is but a scheme to establish the tyranny of riches over labour; to enable the holder of money to trample on the hopes, the energies, the very existence of those who are still struggling to acquire it: in a word, to kick down the ladder by which our "capitalists" had rapidly ascended to wealth, power, and distinction.*

* *Sir R. Peel and Mr. Samuel Jones Lloyd* are two persons of enormous wealth, produced by an excessive use of credit. On starting in life, their fathers were poor men of great faculty, bold enterprise, and good conduct; they lived to be ranked among the most conspicuous millionaires of their country, by what their sons, who inherit their wealth, would call the unwholesome use of artificial credit. Sir Robert Peel lived and carried on his works at Bury, in Lancashire; he there issued one-pound notes to pay the wages of his workmen; he also established a warehouse in London for the sale of his goods, and on that warehouse he drew what were then known in Lancashire as "pig-upon-bacon" bills, at two and three months' date, to pay for the raw materials of his manufacture. He forced his credit to such a degree, as for a time to deprive himself of the means of paying with punctuality the duties on his calicoes, and the officers of Excise held possession of his premises in Milk-street for six weeks for arrears of duties. When Messrs. Jones and Co., of Manchester, commenced the banking business there, they drew bills at two and three months' date on some relatives of the same name, who, we believe, carried on their affairs in Watling street. When that house retired from business, Jones and Co., of Manchester, opened an account with Vere and Co., bankers in Lombard-street, and the amount of bills drawn from Manchester on this account was so large and extraordinary as to alarm

Common sense, humanity, and experience, are all against this system. The opinions of some of the ablest and best informed men are opposed to it. Pitt, Montesquieu, Adam Smith, Jean Baptiste, Say, Hume, Locke, M. Attwood, and nearly all the modern banking authorities, with Rothschild, the late Lord Ashburton, the father of Sir Robert Peel, Alison, Walter Scott, and others, were decidedly adverse to it. In no country were ever known so many and such calamitous failures as have taken place in the British dominions since the passing of the Bill of 1819. Ruin has flowed in an almost uninterrupted course, and industry was allowed no breathing time to recover. The sum total of losses, from the insolvency of banks, caused by over issues or improvident speculation, was but a grain of sand in the balance against the mass of property that sunk beneath the scourge of Sir Robert Peel's monetary laws.

The disastrous consequences which affected England, fell with ten-fold force on Ireland, where there was but one employment, one line only of profitable industry, agriculture : there was there no manufacturing interest to

Vere and Co., who hastily resolved to refuse to accept them, and they were dishonoured for non-acceptance, Vere and Co. holding, we believe, all the time, ample security in the shape of Lancashire bills for all that had been drawn upon them. In these circumstances Jones and Co., of Manchester, being in a thriving condition, having a prosperous business, and being necessary to the trade of the district, on consulting their friends and customers, who were called to deliberate on the case, were at once advised to open their own house in London, and be no longer dependent on the caprice of timid and cautious London bankers, who knew nothing of the great power and salutary uses of mercantile credit. This advice was adopted, and such is the origin of the firm of Jones, Lloyd and Co., which now stands at the head of the banking interest of the city for wealth, skilful management, and, we believe, yearly professional income.—*Bankers' Circular.*

profit by the ruin of the farmer, even if such a paltry benefit could be considered advantageous to any country at such a price. Although the circulation had never been extensive in Ireland, yet all went on smooth enough, while the means were afforded of discharging mutual obligations. With the restriction of the currency, all became ill at ease ; the arm of labour was struck down, and every one began to harass and press on his neighbour.* What has this precious "purity of the standard," this ridiculous "sound and wholesome," conferred on Ireland, to compensate for such wide-spread misery and ruin ?

In Ireland, more than anywhere, it is important to increase the amount of that which is the support of labour and the representative of produce. Its *potato currency* is gone, and the paper circulation has, within a few years, been reduced by more than half its former amount. The result has fully borne out the opinion of Mr. Hume†— "A nation whose money decreases, is actually at that time weaker and more miserable than another nation which possesses no more money, but is *on the increasing hand.*" "Make money plentiful," said Mr. Rothschild to a com-

* I want no further proof of the falsity of principle and the detrimental effects of Sir R. Peel's monetary system than the unquestionable fact, that for more than thirty years, "as often as the Act of 1819 was rigidly enforced, or attempted to be enforced, so often was the nation brought to the verge of ruin, while as often as it was relaxed, prosperity began to return." And most assuredly, never will the great productive industry of the British Empire be successfully developed and flourish in security; never will its glorious institutions be acknowledged and revered with the feelings of gratitude that spring from tranquillity and content, until the spirit of the money-changers be expelled from the sanctuary of the law ; until the unjust and cruel policy of the Peel and Jones Lloyd school be replaced by a system more in unison with the interest and the happiness of the people.

† Not the cheese-parer, but the philosopher.

mittee of the House of Commons—"make money cheap and plentiful, and you will have the trade of the whole world." It has been made scarce and dear; the country has suffered the penalty, but our rulers are unconvinced! Gold is, moreover, unsuited for general circulation from the loss by friction. An account was published lately of one commercial house having lost, in seven years, upwards of two thousand pounds by "light gold." Such a medium of circulation is far too expensive a luxury for so poor a country as Ireland; where so many experiments have failed, why not try that of an abundant, but discreetly regulated paper currency? Let the British Ministers vouchsafe to Ireland the benefit of their supercilious disdain, *fiat experimentum in corpore vili.*

Having already observed, that agricultural produce had been occasionally subjected to ruinous depression, with high protecting duties, while it invariably prospered with an abundant circulating medium, and suffered correspondingly from its contractions, I confess that I am inclined to consider the currency question as one of greater import to agricultural affairs than even that of free trade. At the same time, it must be allowed that, to give a marked preference to the foreign artisan or labourer over our own countrymen, is a singular mode of encouraging domestic industry. A fair competition is desirable, but an oppressive competition is ruinous. How is equality of competition to be established between heavily-taxed and lightly-taxed industry; between the condition of semi-barbarous serfs and the comforts to which British subjects have been used; between the climate of England and that of more genial latitudes, except by a moderate and justly-proportioned import

duty? Above all, how is free trade to be carried on without reciprocity, which foreign governments appear to be every day more determined not to concede?

There can be no doubt, that the unlimited influx of foreign grain, rushing at once into the home market, gave the finishing blow to the struggles and to the hopes of the afflicted Irish people. It came on them by surprise, and at a moment when they were bowed down to the earth by such an accumulation of misfortune as has been seldom witnessed in all the vicissitudes of human affairs.* Thus was the agricultural produce of Ireland virtually excluded from British consumption; because, in their squabbles for power, it pleased my Lord John Russell to throw down the gauntlet of free trade, in a grand and

* "FOREIGN COMPETITION *versus* IRISH INDUSTRY.

"Facts, it is said, are stubborn things, one of them being held to be worth a thousand arguments in deciding controversy. We therefore submit, for the consideration of our readers, the following returns, copied from the *London Standard* of Monday, 7th January. 1850:—

Imports from Dec. 31, *to Jan.* 5, *inclusive.*

	ENGLISH.	SCOTCH.	IRISH.	FOREIGN.
Wheat, ...	2,150	0	0	6,001
Barley, ...	4,339	572	0	8,597
Oats, ...	2,735	2,344	4,380	7,863
Flour, sacks ...	7,875	0	150	3,666
Ditto, barrels ...	0	0	0	12,384

"For *six* entire days not a pound of Irish wheat or Irish barley has found its way into the London market, while the cognominal foreign articles may be counted by thousands; whether of quarters or bushels is of little matter. Even of oats, in which it was predicted we should enjoy something like a monopoly, the quantity supplied by foreigners bears to that sent from Ireland, a ratio of seven to four, or nearly two to one. And only look to the flour returns, which speak for themselves. How long can Ireland bear up against this crushing competition?"

See also Appendix C.

verbose epistle from Edinburgh, which Sir Robert Peel had not the moral courage to take up with defiance.

"Quidquid delirant reges, plectuntur, Achivi."

Premising always, that free trade, to be just and beneficial to any class, must be founded on a perfect equality of condition, and a full reciprocity of dealing between the competing parties, yet it does appear that the farmers, grievously as they have been wronged by this one-sided free trade, will not, eventually, be sufferers to the same extent as artisans, and tradesmen concerned in the fabrication and sale of articles of luxury or comfort: from unmitigated foreign competition, nothing can result to them but starvation and ruin. Ask the shoemakers, the glovers, the hatters, the silk-weavers, the watchmakers, the cabinet-makers, &c., how free trade agrees with them? Worse I think than with the farmer. Our philosophical legislators seem to have forgotten, that the working-classes are producers in the first place, and that they must be remunerated as producers, before they can enjoy as consumers. If, as producers, they are undersold in their own market, such cheapness is no gain to them. Cheap bread is the dearest of any to those who are thereby deprived of the ability to purchase at all.

There is also the double increase of national wealth, when the farmer, and the manufacturer, or tradesman, become reciprocally the consumers of the produce of each other. It is evident, that if either party transfer their custom to foreigners, so much is lost to the country.* The

* "England, with a free importation, will obtain and consume in a given time a certain quantity of foreign grain—say to the value of a million of money—sending abroad in payment a million's worth of manufactured goods. The

cheapness that springs from native abundance is a blessing to all parties, but the redundancy of the market from foreign glut, can never be attended by domestic advantage. Unlimited competition in cheapness is a rivalry in fraud, ending, for the most part, in beggary and disgrace. It implies an utter absence of every humane and honest feeling; a merciless desire to profit by the want of overworked and defenceless wretches, and to extract the greatest possible amount of labour from the lowest possible amount of remuneration. Foreign wages will not answer for British workmen.

result is a million's worth of goods—of wealth—produced in England and sent away, and a million's worth of wealth—of corn, consumed by our people—a million's worth of wealth is produced and consumed. But, suppose by the imposition of a protective duty you cause the manufacturing population to obtain the corn from British cultivators. In this case a million's worth of corn will be produced on British soil, and sent to the towns to be consumed by the manufacturing population; and a million's worth of goods will be produced in the towns and sent into our rural districts in payment, and be consumed by the agricultural part of the community. The manufacturing population consumes a million's worth of corn, and produces a million's worth of goods to pay for it, as under the system of free importation. But this is not all; for the agricultural population also produces a million's worth of wealth—of corn, and consumes a million's worth of wealth—of manufactured goods. Thus the amount of wealth produced and consumed by the British community is doubled. It may be said the manufacturing population would have to pay dearer for grain to the British cultivator—would not get so much in exchange for their million's worth of manufactured goods, as they would if they obtained corn from abroad. Let us suppose they pay 11 per cent. more, or only get 900,000*l.*'s worth of corn for their million's worth of goods. In such case, the result would be, that a million's worth of wealth in the shape of manufactured goods, and 900,000*l.*'s worth of wealth in the shape of corn, would be produced and consumed at home; that is, 900,000*l.*'s worth more than would be produced and consumed if there were no protective duties, and the corn were obtained from abroad. The 900,000*l.*'s worth of corn would be a clear gain to the community, as the men who might produce it, if not so employed, would spend the time necessary for its production in idleness."

Ingenuity is on the rack to get up cheap, showy, and worthless articles; because nothing will sell that has not the appearance of being priced below the cost of its production. The fair and honourable character of the English trader has suffered everywhere from these disreputable contrivances. But, the rage for cheapness has seized the public mind; the Government applauds and the Legislature sanctions it; the great body of the labouring population are demoralized and starved by it.

The first shock of war, the failure of foreign crops, many other possible events will bring irresistible conviction of the mischievous absurdity of our free trade legislation, as well as of the unsoundness and danger of the system which, in defiance of repeated and woeful expeence, it has been so perseveringly sought to inflict on the monetary concerns of the country. Such free trade as has been imposed on us is disastrous enough; but, free trade of this kind, and a restricted currency, cannot long co-exist without ruin and revolution.

The real meaning of cheapness to the consumer will be understood at last. It is *this*, to rob the poor and industrious artisans and labourers of the just reward of their toil, for the benefit of the wealthy drones of society. The unhappy sempstress who receives but five farthings for making a shirt,* earning for a long day's ceaseless work but fourpence half-penny, at the utmost, has no reason to bless the cheapness of these "sound general principles."

Hitherto in England, the starting-point in the race for wealth and consequent distinction, however humble, was

* See *The Times* newspaper, 6th December, 1849.

no impediment on the road to success. It is most important that this facility of onward exertion should be carefully preserved; although it is very true that, in some instances, indelible meanness of soul may have been borne by it to exalted station. The cheap system interrupts the march of this great ascending movement, so essential to the best interests of society; for it restricts the range of commercial enterprise to those huge capitalists, who domineer in the mart, and whose dealings are so extensive as to afford an ample return from the aggregate of infinitesimal profits.

It is revolting to see a grasping, hard-hearted, selfish man, dissolving, as it were, into a flood of benevolence, and congratulating himself on the idea of saving, for the "poor consumer," a penny in the pound on sugar, wrung out of the agony and torture of his fellow-beings; while it never occurs to this disciple of "sound general principles," that by excluding the competition of foreign serfs with his own countrymen, he might enable the "*poor consumer*" to pay that extra penny for sugar, raised by free labour in British colonies; thus rendering the "poor consumer," at once prosperous himself, and the cause of prosperity to others. This universal philanthropy will be found to resolve itself into the narrowest and most inveterate selfishness.

We are told, authoritatively, that there can be no return to the policy that made England the most powerful, and the happiest nation in the world. But, unless it be decreed by heaven, that this mighty empire must fall speedily and ignominiously, we shall retrace our steps and rescue the country from the miserable consequences of this paltry policy, and these pernicious doctrines. To those

who long for the overturning of all established institutions, to the advocates of utilitarian principles, who would convert the venerable cathedrals of England into cotton mills, or sell the materials by auction ; to those "sound and wholesome" philosophers, who wish to effect a wholesale confiscation of estates, and to replace the old proprietors by London Jews, and Manchester cotton-spinners ; to the headlong disciples of "progress," I have nothing to address. But, to those who feel strongly the disgrace and ruin that has befallen their own glorious native land, I would earnestly urge, that the safety, the welfare, the honour of the state must be no longer sacrificed to swell the unhallowed wealth of worthless individuals ; that the well-earned reward of honest industry, the peace and comfort of the peasant's home must be no longer brought into peril to bolster up the blunders of an unprincipled system. There is no alternative ; the season of small measures and palliatives is rapidly passing away. We must return to "the old ways," or proceed onwards to revolution—reverse the engine, or we are on the rocks.

CHAPTER IV.

RELATIONS OF LANDLORD AND TENANT IN IRELAND — TENANT LEAGUE—INCUMBERED ESTATES COMMISSION—EMIGRATION.

The relations of landlord and tenant have long been in a disorderly and unsatisfactory state in Ireland. Whether that may have arisen from the original imperfection of the laws, from the force of peculiar circumstances, or from a disposition in certain parties to abuse or evade the law, is now a matter more of curiosity than of profitable investigation. The important point is to ascertain, as correctly as possible, the actual state of the case, with a view to such remedies as are practically attainable. From long and intimate acquaintance with the subject, I am inclined to doubt the accuracy of the assertion so frequently made and so generally received, that the laws in Ireland, relative to land, are all in favour of the landlord, and systematically adverse to the tenant. I have been taught by somewhat disagreeable experience, that a dishonest and litigious tenant, with an unscrupulous and smart attorney, can, in most instances with impunity, plunder and defy his landlord to his heart's content. On the other hand, the existing law gives to a merciless and unprincipled landlord ample means of crushing a well-disposed and industrious tenant. When both parties are upon a par in roguery, the advantages are pretty nearly balanced; but for the humane

and indulgent landlord, or the quiet, honest tenant, there is no chance of safety except when they happen to meet.

This is a state of things that no Government should have tolerated, and which every man with a spark of integrity must wish to see reformed. I am sincerely and ardently desirous of an equitable and satisfactory adjustment of the question: but I know that this can never be accomplished by the pursuit of wild and impracticable schemes, or by the attempt to marshal the tenantry in hostile array against their landlords. Their well being is indissolubly united; to think otherwise is entirely to mistake the nature of the connexion. Proceedings, in the shape of an attack from either party on the other, can end only in the aggravation of existing evils; no improved condition of society, no benefit to the agricultural class can result from such movements. It seems to me that the principle of dealing between the owner of land and the man who hires it from him, is clearly this: the rent agreed for should be such as would enable the occupier, one year with another, by a reasonable exertion of skill and industry, to provide for the subsistence of his family, pay the rates and taxes, lay by something for "a rainy day," or as future provision for his children, and stand clear with his landlord. This should be the regulating principle, and the law should approach as near to it, as a due regard to the nature and rights of property will permit.

Whatever permanent improvements the tenant may have made, should be fairly valued; and the amount paid to him on the expiration of his lease, without, however giving him the power to retain possession for a

single day beyond the specified term. This, I conceive, to be in equity the tenant's right and the landlord's interest, rationally considered.

There is no legal and peaceable means of securing such a result to which I would not cheerfully subscribe; and I can add, with truth, that I have adhered to the practice during a long course of dealing with my own tenants. There can be no alteration made in the law which would insure the payment of a fair rent, without fraud or delay, by which I should not be decidedly a gainer. Therefore, in stating the difficulties that arise from the complicated nature of the case, and the objections that have been started to the published resolutions of the "Tenant League," I protest against the inference that I am opposed to a just and equitable arrangement between landlord and tenant; on the contrary, nothing could gratify me more than to find those difficulties surmounted, and those objections satisfactorily answered.

The leading principles of the "Tenant League" as announced, are chiefly comprised in two propositions—a compulsory valuation of land, and a perpetuity of tenure. The first involves the avoidance of all existing contracts, wherever, as it is expressly stated, *the tenant* may require his lease to be set aside. It does not appear that a similar privilege is to be conceded to the landlord. Previous contracts being thus cleared away, next comes the important question, by what authority is the new valuation to be made? We are informed that each party shall choose an arbitrator, to be bound to decide according to certain rules drawn up *by the Council of the "Tenant League."* So that the arbitrators are to be nominated merely for the purpose of

carrying out regulations, framed without any concurrence on the part of the landlords.

There will be some little difficulty also in enforcing the prohibition of private contracts between man and man, and in subjecting the lease of every farm in the kingdom to the process of valuation. Again, supposing the perpetuity to be taken from the owner and given to the occupier, the *ci-devant* landlord is to be permitted to repurchase his property in detail; but it is not very clearly stated, whether if he let it there is to be a forfeiture *toties quoties*. In the latter case, after having once redeemed his land, he might possibly be inclined to keep it on his own account. Indeed, if there were not a compulsory letting law, the probability is, that in a few years Ireland would become a mere sheep and cattle rearing draw-farm for England.

In the breach of existing agreements, if *required on one side*—in the compulsory valuation of private property, by an *ex parte* standard—and by the forcible transfer of the final possession from the hands of the present owners, it cannot be denied that, at the first sight, there does appear some trifling approximation to—

> "The good old rule, the simple plan,
> That he should take who has the power,
> And *he should keep* who can."

It is grievous to reflect, that men, many of them not holding a foot of ground either as landlords or tenants, and who, consequently, can be actuated only by the pure and noble sentiments of glowing patriotism, and by a thirst for justice, should from the very novelty of the subject and from their inexperience, expose their disinterested

labours to such (of course unfounded) imputations. But so it has ever been, purity of intention is not always a safe guide amidst the passions, the prejudices, and the contending interests of human existence. It indicates, however, considerable discretion on the part of the directors of the "Tenant League," that they profess unbounded reverence for the constitution of these realms, and have diligently sought to ascertain the precise extent to which their proceedings might be carried without risk of infringing the law. They have set forth a well-devised plan of general organization throughout the provinces; arrangements have been made for levying a good round sum of money; and the usual quantity of native eloquence has been put into requisition. Yet, there is danger that intemperate and thoughtless individuals may, here and there, give unwarrantable latitude to professional opinions, and may even put a forced and erroneous construction on the dictates and sentiments of the supreme Council itself. In all popular confederacies the great object should be, to enlighten the intellect, in order to restrain the impetuosity of the many. It may happen also in this particular case, that a considerable degree of very natural impatience may be generated in the public mind, if no *authorised* practical results should be achieved by the display of moral energy, and the able, but strictly constitutional exertions of the leaders in this adventurous undertaking. It will take a high pressure of moral force, I apprehend, to induce a British Parliament to enact, that there should be a compulsory valuation of land, any more than a compulsory valuation of the produce of land. And, it might puzzle the "collective wisdom," as much to devise an effectual method of

controlling the agreements between lessor and lessee, as between buyer and seller in fair and market. Neither is it probable, that legislators at the other side of the water could be easily convinced of the justice and expediency of decreeing that the lawful possessor of a property, who contracts with a tenant to let him have a farm for a fixed term, and no longer, shall thereby forfeit all claim to resumption so long as a rent at a compulsory valuation shall be paid.

It is most desirable and essential to the improvement, and, of course, to the tranquillity of Ireland, that the just rights of property on all sides should be clearly defined, and effectually protected by plain, straightforward, and *indefeasible* legislation. It will then be for Government to see that the law is obeyed. As matters now are, it is but too true, that a worthless landlord may avail himself of the strict letter of a contract, to enforce obligations with which circumstances, beyond the control of the tenant, have rendered it impossible for him to comply. Without any fault on the part of the occupier, he may have been reduced to want by ministerial experiments; and the improvements on which he had expended his capital, with, perhaps, the labour of his whole life, may be confiscated for the exclusive benefit of his landlord. This is a heavy grievance, a crying injustice. It ought to be redressed without delay; and, in this instance, the remedy is of easy application. But how stands the law between a wasteful, lazy, and litigious tenant and his landlord? By a series of intricate forms, the slightest neglect of which on the part of the landlord would be fatal to the proceedings, the tenant can contrive to set his landlord at defiance; he not only avoids pay-

ment of rent, but he may rack his farm for years with perfect impunity, and finally make off with himself when all means of further annoyance are exhausted. If paupers should settle on a piece of land without a shadow of title, as happened lately on the estate of the Crown, or if a house and an acre of land be allowed rent free to a gate keeper, in either case the occupant can be dispossessed only by an expensive suit in ejectment on the title. It should be remembered that landlords *are bound* by covenants, and are a fixed mark for condign punishment, should they exceed by the smallest tittle the exact limits of their legal rights; whereas the tenant may violate every contract, aud set at nought every principle of law, leaving to the landlord enormous costs to pay, and a "dissolving view" of his persecutor in full march for the United States. These are events of every-day occurrence in Ireland; they would seem to call for a prompt and effective remedy.

The difficulties in the way of the intended reform are not by any means diminished, as the matter comes to be more minutely investigated. There must be interference and restriction at every step; for instance, if covenants of any description are to be permitted, it is to be feared that, under the circumstances, some landlords might be indiscreet enough to introduce clauses into a lease that would effectually neutralize the operation of the proposed improvements. If, through the instrumentality of those zealous and patriotic gentlemen who have placed themselves at the head of the Tenant League, an agrarian code could be concocted that would establish the just rights of property on a firm and unquestionable basis, what an invaluable benefit would be conferred on all

classes of her Majesty's Irish subjects! Hitherto we have heard of no complaints on the part of English tenants against their landlords, yet it is extremely doubtful whether the adoption, in their integrity, of the English laws relative to the tenancy of land, would exactly suit the habits and the wishes of Irishmen in this particular. Indeed, the Tenant-Right delegates who went over last spring to London, expressly state that they found it impossible to prevail on English Members of Parliament, however intelligent in other respects, to see this matter "*in an Irish point of view.*" They had a formal, John Bullish notion, that a bargain is a bargain, and should be binding on both parties alike.

With such numerous and vexatious impediments in the way, I cannot disguise my apprehensions, that during the critical interval between promise and performance, the principles of the Tenant League Council may be put to a very severe test. I am the more inclined to dread a result of this nature, from the language employed by some of the correspondents of the Council, in which landlords "as a body," are denounced as malefactors of the vilest description, inaccessible to remorse, and past all hope of improvement. One of them expresses himself thus in a Letter to the Editor of the *Nation*, 21st September, 1850:—

"That the present system of Irish landlordism is a monstrous and infamous abuse, and that its continuance must be the ruin of every interest in the land, every right-minded man now admits. The landlords will certainly not reform it of themselves and take to honest and Christian courses. The harrowing experience of the last few years proves that, as a body, they are men of

spoliation and of blood, mammonists and man-slayers, who will trample upon humanity and justice, and make light of the sacrifice of human life in prosecuting their mission of devastation and plunder. Blind, cruel, and callous, like the plague-struck persecutor of God's people of old, they will, in the face of outraged heaven, gratify old instincts, however barbarous; cling to old privileges, however tyrannous; even ultimately to their own inevitable destruction."

I submit that this is not the tone and temper in which so grave an affair should be discussed. Calm, deliberate, and equitable legislation can scarce be expected to originate in feelings so unwarrantably excited.

There is another, and very material point concerning the interest of the most helpless portion of the poor, a class from whom, before the potato blight, exorbitant rents were wrung, and whose hopeless wretchedness constitutes an insurmountable barrier to improvement, I allude to the cottier tenantry. We have not been informed whether it be meant that compulsory valuation and perpetuity of tenure, with their adjuncts, are to descend through all the degrees of sub-letting, which have taken place so extensively throughout Ireland, and, for the most part, in direct violation of covenants inserted to prevent the practice. Neither has it been stated, whether the improved measure is to be applicable to towns, villages and town parks, or where the line of demarcation is to be fixed. Will no person be permitted to take any portion of land under any circumstances, for a less term than all futurity? Those are weighty points, and require mature deliberation.

The conduct of Government towards the landowners

of Ireland is in every way deserving of particular notice. By the alteration of the currency, and the free admission of foreign corn, the value of landed property was reduced by two-thirds. No compensation whatever was made for this unexampled legislative interference ;* the debts of every kind affecting land remained as before. The destruction of property was accompanied by the destruction of character. Atrocities, unheard of and incredible, were freely and perseveringly imputed to Irish landlords. The Press thundered at them, amiable philanthropists recited to shuddering senators a catalogue of landlord enormities, that made the blood run cold in their veins, while Ministers cheered on the cry against the victims of their unjust and iniquitous policy. Since the first rude groundwork of society was laid, never was there witnessed before, the monstrous spectacle of a Government declaring war against a numerous, loyal, and respectable class of their fellow-countrymen, beating down the value of their possessions, and openly avowing a fixed purpose of hunting them to extermination. That the landowners should have borne such unjustifiable treatment almost without resistance, can be accounted for only by the well-known fact, that from their habits of submission to the laws, and their dread of any movement that might bring into hazard established institutions, they have ever allowed themselves to be wronged and plundered, without an attempt to exercise the ample powers of redress within their reach. As Sir Robert Walpole said of them,

* When slavery was first abolished in our West India Islands, twenty millions were voted as compensation to slave owners. When the property of Irish landowners, to a far greater amount, was sacrificed to free-trade, the only indemnity they received was a confiscation court for the summary disposal of their estates at little more than a nominal value.

"they may be fleeced and slaughtered as easily and as safely as their own sheep." Confiscation *by law* is more unnatural, and far more dangerous, than confiscation by revolutionary violence. In the first case, the evil is incurable, for it is in the remedy itself. Yet, it has been broadly asserted, that the sentence of the modern Court of Confiscation may not prove eventually as conclusive, or satisfactory, as it was originally supposed. Already, the machinery appears to be somewhat clogged, and there can be little doubt, that with the increasing number of estates dragged into its vortex, the embarrassment will augment proportionally. I am informed, that strong doubts have been expressed by an eminent legal authority, as to the validity of the boasted Parliamentary title. It is admitted, that it effectually excludes the claims of puisne creditors, but whether it will be available in a trial of ejectment, is not quite so certain. On the restoration of Charles the Second, a Court of Claims was instituted to revise the extensive confiscations of the Usurper; and, if ever reason and the principles of sound justice resume their salutary influence over the conduct of public affairs in Ireland, this mass of legalized rapine must become the subject of an impartial and searching investigation, with a view to indemnify the unfortunate sufferers.*

* "But let us ask our readers to remember the circumstances of Ireland when this step was taken. A famine had in the first instance, in extinguishing a great part of the produce of the soil, destroyed the power of the tenant to pay, and of the landlord to receive rent. This was not all; that same famine, while it decreased the means, increased the liabilities of every Irish proprietor. The starving people were left to him to feed. Even this was not all. Human legislation aggravated the mysterious calamity which Heaven had inflicted. The recognition of the right to outdoor relief imposed upon

Evictions to a great extent, and sometimes accompanied by circumstances revolting to humanity, have occurred of late years in Ireland. They have not only been carefully displayed to public notice, but with grossly exaggerated details, wherever, by possibility, an addition

the land a burden, the extent of which no one could calculate. Other imposts fleeced the owners and occupiers of land, to repay the prodigal expenditure of our Government, in what were termed public works. The measures of free trade, in lowering, by at least a third, the value of Ireland's only produce, more than proportionally reduced the value of her land. The circulation of money in Ireland is incontestibly proved by the Bank returns to have fallen off nearly one-half. The necessary effect of all this was to destroy all confidence, to unsettle all calculations, especially as to land. Tenants left the island as a doomed place, and threw upon the hands of their landlords farms which no one would take, and upon which, although lying utterly waste, the landlord was made personally responsible for a poor-rate of not unfrequently ten shillings in the pound. This was a state of things not very inviting to purchasers; it was not just the time when any sane man would have proposed to sell property in Ireland. But just at this moment, and at a time when everything connected with land in Ireland seemed at its lowest ebb, when all confidence was gone, when no security could be felt in any investment in the soil, the Government, with that paternal care which has distinguished their conduct towards every Irish interest in turn, by legislative enactment have called an auction of every incumbered estate in the island, and are now offering for sale at the auction mart of Messrs. Richards, Longfield, and Co., property, the annual produce of which cannot be much less than a million; an amount of property for which we will venture to say, the most prosperous times would not invite purchasers or find the purchase money, but which, if sold now, must be sold at a sacrifice that will make the transfer an act of spoliation, differing very little in moral qualities from that cheap and expeditious mode of conveyancing, to which we have already adverted, as practised in old times by very respectable commissioners upon Hounslow Heath. If the act is to be executed at all, no care, no caution of the Commissioners, even were they disposed to exercise it, can avoid this result. It is a moral impossibility to offer for sale this great quantity of property without depreciating it. It is just as impossible to induce any person to bid its fair value for Irish property now. The policy of the Incumbered Estates Court is just that of the man who, watching the moment of commercial depression, would pounce upon his debtor, and sacrifice his property by a sheriff's sale."—*Standard Newspaper*, October, 1850.

could be suggested to the horrible reality. For those who, at such a time, ordered those clearances with any view to mere profit, or loss, or to carry into effect the inhuman and unchristian tenets of political economy, no vindication can, or ought to be, put forward. In their regard, let the reprobation of man be a prelude to the vengeance of Heaven. Let us, however be just, and remount to primary causes. Who compelled this work of devastation and anguish? Who robbed both landlord and tenant, and rendered both unable to acquit their obligations? Placed between a persecuting Government and an inflexible creditor, what chance was left to the unhappy landlord, but to destroy, or be destroyed? Again, who called into existence this pauper population, and ground them to the earth, while the power of grinding them remained? Not the head landlords certainly, at least, not for the last quarter of a century, but many of those who shout loudest for "tena n right," and exclaim most lustily against the inhuman tyranny of landlords.—If the bared arm of Divine wrath ever yet struck down the senseless arrogance of pitiless mortals, its vengeance must be reserved for those misgoverning rulers, who wantonly blighted the growth of national improvement, reduced a numerous and a thriving people to the condition of a beleaguered town, and then deliberately inflicted on them them the heaviest curse of all, their paltry, demoralizing, and destructive *remedial* measures.

Much has been said and written of the sufferings of evicted tenants. But little has been heard of the affliction of those landed proprietors, who have been ruthlessly expelled from the homes where their ancestors had lived, hospitably, independently, usefully, for many a generation past. Plundered by fraudulent tenants, and

sold up by the court of confiscation, their feelings and their destitution have excited little indignation or sympathy. Perhaps it would have been politic, at least it would have been decorous, on the part of the Tenant League, if, with the assertion of those rights which they claim for themselves, they had mingled some expression of regret for the fallen fortunes of such landlords as had proved themselves to be the friends and the protectors of their tenantry. I cannot believe that a London Jew, or a Manchester cotton-spinner, if he could be induced to invest his money in a security so precarious as an Irish estate, would prove a kinder, or a more generous landlord, than the majority of those whom a Whig Ministry have doomed to extermination. It will be found on inquiry, that men who have made money are not particularly lenient creditors, and that they have been known to seize the property of their starving debtor, or turn his family into the street and himself into a jail, with as little hesitation or remorse as any landlord that ever disgraced that name and position in Ireland. But, the money-changers belong to a privileged class: weak and narrow-minded statesmen bow down before them, *their* inhumanity is unrecorded. In Ireland, the only creditor who may not, who dares not, seek for payment of what is lawfully due to him, is the landlord: but *pay he must:* there is no outpouring of parliamentary eloquence to depict his unmerited sufferings, no government to which he can look for protection; he has no *debtor right* league at his back.

After all, so long as a vestige of original property in land is tolerated, much must, of necessity, be left to the kindly feelings and to the sense of honour beyond the

reach of law, that should exist in the heart of the landlord. No enactment short of complete confiscation can preserve the idle, the mismanaging, or unfortunate tenant from being more or less at the mercy of him to whom he has to pay *a rent*, modify it as you will. Now, it certainly does not appear to be the most efficient mode of calling into active operation those benevolent feelings on the part of the landlord, to assume as an incontrovertible fact, that he is *ex officio* a bloodthirsty tyrant and an insatiable extortioner ; to treat him as a public enemy, and regulate the letting of his land by an arrangement in the forming of which he has had no voice. Evictions would recommence, a new "Tenant League" would spring up with ulterior views, or recourse might be had again to the "wild justice of revenge."

Of the debates at the Tenant League meetings, little has been transmitted to the public ; but, every one who has read the earnest and repeated assurance of the Council, that they seek nothing but to secure the just rights of all parties, and to place them on a firm and amicable foundation, must wish them a speedy and complete success. With a self-devotion that is truly admirable, its members have undertaken a task that may, at any moment, involve a most serious responsibility. A discreet and sober officer of the council in Dublin might suddenly find himself made answerable for a lively outburst of Southern patriotism, or a flare up of the Northern lights. This sort of mutual insurance is by no means calculated to encourage timid and cautious politicians. Then, again, a course of strictly legal and discreetly subdued operations is not well fitted to excite the favour, or to command the support of the multitude. Should these saga-

cious and upright directors, influenced by such considerations, or meeting the ingratitude that too frequently attends the exercise of patriotic virtue, withdraw from the cause, what awful consequences might ensue! Adventurers, with little talent and less honesty, without property or character, practised dealers in public disturbance for personal profit, would soon throw past professions into the shade. The Council has already intimated an intention of appropriating Parliamentary representation to the objects of the Tenant League. Undoubtedly, under such auspices, the elections will be conducted in the most harmonious and constitutional manner. The only force employed will be the force of energetic and unanswerable appeals to the reason and good feelings of he constituency. If, however, by any chance, the management should pass into less pure and pacific hands, the melo-drama of Repeal agitation would be revived, to the small edification or advantage of the Irish people. Immense sums would be levied and disappear; a pass-word would admit to Parliament persons but indifferently qualified to discharge the duties of representatives, and who could take their seats only by an act of flagrant perjury. These worthies would quickly come to an understanding with knowing Whig negociators, by whom free permission would be granted to them to brawl for "tenant-right," and even to vote for it, if it ever should find its way to the House of Commons, certain of a majority of ten to one against it. On all other occasions, especially when the existence of the Cabinet was threatened, the honourable members would be found voting straightforward with the minister, "for a consideration."

In the meantime, agitation in every shape would be

kept up at home; occasionally, perhaps, enlivened by what the French call "*voie de fait.*" The most solemn engagements would be volunteered to give up the ghost at a certain time and place, if tenant-right, in its utmost extension, did not then and there become the law of the land. The measure would be deferred to the Greek kalends, and the patriots, alas! would survive; but their merits would be ultimately recognised, and their talents made available for the public service, in the various departments of the State.

I cannot pass by unnoticed, the portentous subject of Emigration. When a country sends forth emigrants, as a hive does its swarms, from a plethora of inhabitants, it is a natural and salutary relief to those who depart, as well as to those who remain. In this case, however, the emigrant should bear with him the means of future support; unlike thousands of our unhappy countrymen who rush abroad, unfit to go, and unable to stay at home. Where circumstances allowed, in many instances relief and aid were freely given by the maligned and calumniated landlords; but Government did little to amend the condition of these forlorn outcasts. It was contrary to "sound general principles!" I have often passed, with deep commiseration, through crowds of these "poor exiles," bewailing the ties about to be broken for ever, and the dark and doubtful prospect before them.

> "Good heavens! what sorrows gloomed that parting day,
> That called them from their native haunts away;
> When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
> Hung round their home, and fondly looked their last;
> And shudd'ring still to face the distant deep,
> Returned and wept, and still returned to weep."

I shall make no apology for the quotation. I have no pretensions to overmuch sensibility; but there are feelings that no utilitarian or pseudo-philosophical sneers should be permitted to stifle, and emotions that we should neither try to suppress, nor blush to avow. If employment cannot be provided at home, let us have emigration; but let it be conducted on principles of humanity and justice. The passage vessels should be subjected to a careful inspection; and due attention should be given to the accommodation, the facilities for cleanliness, and the abundant supply of wholesome food. An active and trustworthy agent should be stationed at the colonial ports; allotments of land should be prepared for the emigrants; instruction and assistance should be afforded to them, for at least the first twelve months. These destitute beings should be taught to feel that they were not quite abandoned; that a protecting power still watched over their wayfaring venture, and that for the industrious and well-disposed, a home had been prepared beyond "the distant deep." From the moment that the emigrants embarked, they should be considered as under the special care of the State authorities, which should never lose sight of them, until the means of acquiring honestly a comfortable independence were placed within their reach. I will not enlarge on the sound policy of such treatment. I am aware that the trashy objection of cost will be made to it; but I may be permitted to observe, that it is not unworthy of an enlightened statesman to consider, whether it be not more desirable, politically speaking, that such numerous bands of emigrants should leave their native shores under impressions of gratitude and affection towards the parent

country, than, as is too frequently the case, to be driven forth with minds exasperated by wrongs, and panting for revenge.

The emigration from Ireland has long since passed the salutary point. It is now the fatal depletion of an already sinking patient. The able-bodied, intelligent farmers, with some capital, a class of men whom it would take a century to replace, are quitting us every day by hundreds for the United States, there to cherish, extend and bequeath a deadly, implacable hatred to England, its government, and its depopulating "sound general principles." Still, we are told that the system works well; that everything is improving, that the fortunate result is on the eve of arriving, just as it has been at any time during the last thirty-five years. We may be incredulous, but what care our rulers?—we suffer on, and we submit.

The crusade which it has pleased the Ministers of the Crown to wage against Irish landlords, will be a matter of astonishment to posterity. No extenuation of their conduct can be offered, except that they might have been influenced by some secret but futile expectation of ultimate advantage from all this unjust and intolerable suffering. It will scarce be credited, that the statesmen to whom the government of a vast empire was confided, were themselves governed by the clamour of a mischievous and unprincipled faction. But whatever may have been the object of their policy, ministers have evidently overshot the mark in aiming at the too rapid extinction of landowners in Ireland. Between their free-trade and their restricted currency, their confiscation courts, and the atrocious slanders of their press, Irish estates have

become almost unsaleable. There is no security for life or property left to an Irish landlord. Few men of common sense, and possessed of a competence elsewhere, would accept of an estate in Ireland with the condition of residing on it. How would English landed proprietors like to be perpetually on their trial for character and life, in a court where no evidence is admitted for the accused, and where execution frequently precedes conviction? Instances are not rare of voluntary abatements of rent by the landlord; yet, if, after years of non-payment, he should seek to recover possession of his land by eviction, he is forthwith arraigned as an inhuman monster, unfit to live. He gives a complete and undeniable vindication of his conduct; his statement goes for nothing, and the charge is passed to the general account of what is termed "landlordism."

Nothing can be more extravagantly false than the ideas current in England as to the rights and conduct of Irish landlords. Whatever might have been the case formerly, it is now all duty and no rights, at least none that can be enforced, except at the risk of life and reputation. When the wretched "clearance" system is denounced, does it ever occur to the indignant philanthropists to inquire who drove the landlords to it? Stripped of his property, loaded with execration and insult, the unfortunate Irish proprietor is called on to exercise towards all that forbearance which he receives from none; he is expected to give employment, to pay his rates and taxes, while his debts remain doubled in value, and are exacted with a degree of severity proportioned to the general alarm and mistrust of landed property. We hear of no lament over the expulsion of ancient families

from the long-descended homes where they practised the rites of hospitality, gave occupation to the poor, and were the liberal guardians of their tenantry. Estates where upwards of eighty thousand pounds had been expended on the principal residence alone, were disposed of for less than twenty thousand by a compulsory auction. Have those unhappy families who have been thus hunted down, robbed of their all, and turned out on the world to starve, no claim for commiseration and redress? It would appear not. The Communist feeling is abroad; *they had it long enough.* The generous sympathies of the modern public are exclusively reserved for overholding tenants, squatters, and crop-lifters. I have no hesitation to state my conviction, that to evict an industrious, well-conducted tenant, who pays a fair rent, is an act of insanity that should qualify his landlord for a lunatic asylum. But no man should be held solely responsible for acts from which his natural feelings recoil, and to which nothing short of an irresistibly compelling power could bring him to consent. No offence is intended to the liberal press, to political economists, to London usurers, and Manchester cotton-lords, or to our enlightened Ministers; but it is humbly submitted that the mere fact of being a resident Irish landlord ought not to be considered a justifiable pretext for depriving a British subject of all protection for his property, his character, and his life.

At other times, the ruined land-holders are exhorted to study what is called "high farming." They bid us to exert ourselves, to take to chemistry and machinery, and attend lectures on the last improved fashions of agriculture. By what right do these arrogant men presume

to impose this increase of labour and expense on people who were doing well, and who would have continued to prosper, had it not been for the mischievous interference of these political intermeddlers with our affairs? They throw down my house, they carry off the materials, and then desire me to rebuild it according to a more scientific order. It is announced, *ex cathedra*, that "to effectually develope the agricultural industry of the country, we must emancipate the land from the remaining trammels in which it is still held; and having made it free, it must be allowed to remain so. Then, and not till then, may we expect to see our farmers in a prosperous condition. *Let a farm be taken with the same views with which a warehouse is rented—a more commercial spirit will actuate our farmers*, competition will regulate the letting value of land, and we shall hear no more of such absurdities as determining the letting value of any kind of property by a public valuation."* Now, may heaven avert the day when a farm shall "be taken with the same views with which a warehouse is rented." I protest against being placed relatively to my tenants as a mill-owner is to his factory slaves—to use them while profitable, and then fling them on the workhouse. Then, indeed, would the scourge of "sound general principles" be laid on the backs of the defenceless poor. Then should we require the services of a Tenant League against those "warehouse" proprietors, with minds devoted to Mammon, and consciences inaccessible to feelings of pity or remorse.

There was much of absurdity, and, perhaps, of evil, in the feudal system; yet it contained a redeeming principle. The landlord and his tenant were bound to each

* See Appendix, D.

other by ties of mutual attachment and dependence, which the "commercial spirit" of our days has brought into disrepute, without substituting a rule of action better calculated to make either happy, or more pleased with their relative position.* I have been a landlord for many years, and I never once let "competition regulate the letting value" of my lands. No consideration whatever could induce me to set up to the highest bidder the farm of a tenant, whose family had lived for generations contentedly under mine, or whose personal good character entitled him to a preference. I write not this with any mawkish hope of obtaining favour, or of deprecating censure. I feel that I belong to a class proscribed by mistaken legislation, by popular clamour, and, above all, devoted by its own unnatural and dastardly submission. The worst feelings towards landlords have been long and sedulously inculcated to the farming population, who have been taught to turn a cold and jealous eye even on the kindest actions of the proprietor. It is true that some trace of compunctious visitings have been latterly exhibited by the supreme authorities, and in the columns of the hitherto immitigable press. The *Times* newspaper has actually discovered that "he (the landowner) is not blessed with any peculiar good fortune which makes it

* "In the history of modern times, the avarice of commercial monopoly, no less than the ambition of weak and wicked chiefs, seems to have fomented the universal discord—to have added stubbornness to the mistakes of cabinets, and indocility to the infatuation of the people. Let it ever be remembered that it is the direct influence of commerce to make the interval between the richest and the poorest man wider and more unconquerable. Let it be remembered that it is a foe to everything of real worth and excellence in the human character. The odious and disgusting aristocracy of wealth is built upon the ruins of all that is good in chivalry or republicanism."

"Possideat quantum rapuit Nero—montibus aurum
Exæquet, nec amet quemquam, nec ametur ab ullo."

JUVENAL.

justifiable to fleece him—society has no greater claims upon him than upon others." The "able and energetic" Viceroy of Ireland, in his late presidential progress through the North, went so far as to hint that there were good landlords in Ireland, and seemed disinclined to patronise the more rampant demonstrations of the tenant-right principles. In all this there is a tenderness of expostulation, a "*parcere subjectis*" tone that clearly denotes a change in the current of public opinion, either from a tardy sense of error, or an inceptive apprehension of approaching evil.

Meanwhile our Ministers enjoy and bless the treacherous calm of a parliamentary vacation; they lie listlessly, awaiting the chances of a popular air to waft them on, all heedless of the ground-swell and the lowering clouds that gather about them in every direction. In Ireland, political asperity rages, unchecked by prolonged famine, wide-spreading disease, and accumulated calamities. Theological rancour, democratic communism, and an hourly increasing aversion to law and order, unite in rapid progress towards a great social convulsion.

Alas! where are our guides in this extremity of peril? Where are the statesmen of ability and resolution competent to encounter the storm, and to pilot the State vessel through the conflict of troubled waters? Certainly not in Downing-street.

CHAPTER V.

WHY SHOULD ROMAN CATHOLICS SUPPORT THE WHIGS?

"Some souls we see
Grow hard and stiffen with adversity;
Yet these by Fortune's favours are undone,
Resolv'd, into a baser form they run,
And bore the wind, but cannot bear the sun."

WHY should Roman Catholics support the Whigs? I have never been able to comprehend thoroughly the motives for that implicit obedience and abject submission to the Whig party for which Roman Catholics have long been remarkable. It may not, perhaps, be difficult to account for the devoted support which Whig Ministers are accustomed to receive on all pressing occasions from a considerable portion of the Irish Roman Catholic members, for whose votes satisfactory reasons can be traced through the entire range of Crown patronage, from the excise to the peerage. This circumstance, though extremely natural, has sometimes had a disastrous influence on the prospects of Ireland, as was exemplified in the rejection of the benevolent and comprehensive project of the late Lord George Bentinck for the employment of starving Irishmen in the construction of railways. Often has the fate of a Whig cabinet hung on the sweet voices of Irish representatives; but whenever the cabalistic words, "If you do not support us, we re-

sign," were uttered at a meeting convened for the purpose by Ministers, the effect was instantaneous and complete. Yet there was once an independent and high-minded Irish party in the Honourable House who could resist the blandishments of the Treasury, and on whom threats of resignation produced no effect whatever, when the interest of their unfortunate country was in question. That party was broken up by the late Mr. O'Connell and replaced by his nominees, with, as it would seem, little gain for the public, or addition to the national repute for ability, eloquence, or patriotism.

It is worthy of observation that *every concession made to Roman Catholics, from the first dawn of toleration to the repeal of the penal laws in* 1829, *was the work of Tories exclusively.* With the exception of one or two situations about the Court, more of honour than of emolument, and to which the parties were fairly entitled by their high rank, the English Roman Catholics appear to have kept aloof from the seduction of ministerial patronage; yet, on all occasions, whether present or by proxy, the name of every Roman Catholic peer is to be found on the Whig list in a division.

One is tempted to ask, do those noble lords ever read the history of their country? or, having read it, by what unaccountable infatuation do they give into this blind adherence to the hereditary persecutors of their name and religion.

It might be hard to produce a more striking instance of voluntary self-disrespect, to be accounted for only by the force of habit, or the absence of all reflection.

We may be permitted to doubt whether the Whigs, as a party, were at any time sincere in their professions of

liberality towards Roman Catholics. It is true that they made Catholic Emancipation their war-cry in many a fierce assault on their political antagonists; but the Whigs either could not devise the means of success, or wanted the inclination to achieve it. When in power, their cold and selfish advocacy resolved itself into a constant endeavour to damp the expectations and keep back the petitions of the Roman Catholics. Even the miserable pittance of relief which, from very shame, they ventured to propose,* was at once abandoned in the hope of retaining office. George the Third, who knew them well, and was determined to get rid of them, met their undignified submission by a proposal too insulting to be borne. Their opponents returned to power, and not long after, the very point at issue, the admission of Roman Catholics to promotion in the army and navy, was freely conceded. There were, indeed, truly great and honourable men among the Whigs, even in our own days; giants they were in their career; but they are gone, and nothing now remains but the unforgiving sternness of anti-Catholic prejudice, thinly disguised by the mask of infidel liberality. It is a sorry sight to behold Roman Catholic nobles allowing themselves to be gratuitously dragged through all the mire of a tortuous and contemptible policy by the effete representatives of the men who proscribed their religion, who hunted their forefathers to destruction, and poured out their innocent blood as water on the scaffold! Nor is there any reason to believe that the opinions of modern Whigs have undergone any considerable alteration respecting the treat-

* In 1807.

ment of Roman Catholics. In "An Essay on the English Government and Constitution," written by the present first Lord of the Treasury, and printed at London, in 1821, I find the following passage. In discussing the Toleration Act, 1 William and Mary, ch. 18, Lord John Russell thus expresses himself:—"Amongst the concessions made to religious liberty, there were none in favour of the Roman Catholics. On the contrary, new laws were passed, of excessive severity, tending to render the Roman Catholics poor and ignorant; thus shutting them out, not only from all power, but from all the avenues to power, and making them, as it were, slaves among a nation of free men. Yet it must not be supposed that a nation so humane as the English acted in this harsh and unusual bitterness without deep provocation. The reigns of Elizabeth, of James I., of Charles II., and James II., had been disturbed by plots more or less sanguinary, some using as their means the assassination of the sovereign, others the introduction of a foreign army, but all tending to extinguish the liberties and subdue the independence of England. Whether the precautions adopted by the English parliament were wise, I will not decide; but I am clearly of opinion that they were just." ! !—Chap xiii. p. 111.*

* That great moralist, Doctor Johnson, thought otherwise. He severely reprobated the barbarous, debilitating policy of the British Government, which, he said, was the most detestable mode of persecution. To a gentleman who hinted such policy might be necessary to support the authority of the English Government, he replied by saying, "Let the authority of the English Government perish rather than be maintained by iniquity. Better would it be to restrain the turbulence of the natives by the authority of the sword, and to make them amenable to law and justice by an effectual and vigorous police, than to grind them to powder by all manner of disabilities and incapacities."—*Boswell's Life of Johnson.*

Such is the explicit and deliberate vindication of the penal code, which has been placed on record by the Whig leader. Had the noble lord made use even of the word *expedient*, it would have ill assorted with those extreme principles of liberality which he professes, and on which he founds his claim to public estimation and support. But he decides, without hesitation, that these laws were *just*, and the nature of justice is immutable and independent of circumstances. What is morally wrong can never be politically right. How? Was the law that gave a premium to the child for betraying the parent, *just?* Was the law that disabled a Roman Catholic from being the guardian of his own children, *just?* Was the law that prompted the brother to rob his brother, and confirmed the robbery, *just?* Was the law that held out a reward for priest-catching,* and made it felony for a Roman Catholic clergyman to administer the sacred rites of his Church, *just?* Was the law that enabled a Protestant to offer five pounds for the horse of a Papist, and seize it, *just?* In fine, were the laws that "tended to render Roman Catholics poor and ignorant, and make them, as it were, slaves among a nation of freemen," *just?* Yes! it appears that in the Whig vocabulary these laws, or, as Lord John Russell is pleased to designate them, these "*precautions*," were just! I freely make a present to the noble author, of his "plots more or less sanguinary," more or less fabulous, more or less supported by barefaced perjury; but true or false, I never can con-

* By the 8th of Anne, c. 3, clause 20, the following rewards are provided:—

"For discovering an Archbishop, Bishop, Vicar-general, or other person, exercising any foreign ecclesiastical jurisdiction, . . £50.
For a regular or secular clergyman, ... £20.
For a Popish schoolmaster or usher, ... £10."

sent to admit them as a justification of such ferocious and indiscriminate vengeance.

"Sunt autem quædam officia etiam adversus eos servanda a quibus injuriam acceperis. *Est enim ulciscendi et puniendi modus.*"*

It is utterly inconceivable how Lord John Russell, who has acquired, and, I believe, most deservedly, the reputation of a humane and honourable man in all the relations of private life, could ever have been led by party prepossessions, or by enthusiastic veneration for the memory of his ancestor, to arrive at so monstrous and unwarrantable a conclusion.† I am aware that it is open to the Minister to dismiss the imputation, by declaring‡

* Cicero de Officiis.

† "Christianity disowns the penal code of Ireland. It could have no connexion with laws which sought their object through every variety of moral turpitude: which offered premiums for the blackest perfidy, and rewards for the basest of passions; and when it had raked together, from out the vices and the villanies of mankind, a mass of the foulest pollution, applied it to adorn the edifice of the State, or dragged it as an acceptable sacrifice into the house of God. It was not Christianity which tempted the unhappy son or brother to the plunder of his parent or kinsman, and led him to perdition with a bribe. It was not Christianity, which, after invading and polluting the sanctity of private life, after tearing to pieces all the charities and obligations of kindred, went forth upon the high-way to fill the measure of its brutal rapacity with the plunder of the passengers; that robbed the traveller of his horse, if its value exceeded five pounds, and made the robber its appraiser; that levied contributions on the piety of the people, taxing them for worshipping God according to the custom of their fathers; that persecuted the priest as a felon, and made his ministration a crime, asserting that his religion had its root in ignorance, and nourishing that root with all the assiduity of legislation."—*O'Driscol's Ireland.*

This can hardly be considered *just*, even towards those whose religion is said to consist of "*the mummeries of superstition.*"

† In March, 1838, Lord John Russell resisted successfully the appointment of a committee to consider the Acts relating to the importation of corn; also, see his Letter to the Electors of Huntingdonshire on the Corn Laws.

that he has changed his mind in this matter as in others; but it is one of the greatest misfortunes of our times, that, from the practice of modern statesmen, the nation at large can never know on what professions they may rely, or by what principles they are to be governed. Public men, now-a-days, are "neither fish nor flesh; a man knows not where to have them." This subject leads naturally to an inquiry into the original formation of the Whig party, and the unmitigated bigotry of one of its most celebrated leaders, whose apotheosis has long formed one of the most singular of historical delusions—I mean the Lord Russell, beheaded for treasonable conspiracy in the reign of Charles II. I know that to question the fact of his having fallen a martyr in the cause of civil and religious liberty, is to incur the guilt of *leze whiggery;* but, not feeling scrupulous as to the commission of that offence, I shall proceed to investigate the validity of his lordship's claim to such high distinction, both as regards his crime towards his sovereign, and his immoderate hatred of Roman Catholics.

In the paper delivered to the Sheriff by Lord Russell, immediately before his execution, he avows his detestation of the Roman Catholic faith in these terms:—"For Popery, I look on it as an idolatrous and bloody religion, and, therefore, thought myself bound to do all I could against it." He adds, "yet, whatever apprehensions I had of Popery, and of my own severe and heavy* share I was like to have under it, when it should prevail; I never had a thought of doing anything against it basely and inhumanly, but what would consist with the Christian

* Perhaps his Lordship here alludes to what his noble biographer terms "an idle fear of losing his abbey lands."

religion, and the laws and liberties of this kingdom." This is a bold assertion. So, then, to countenance the infamous perjuries of Titus Oates was consistent with Lord Russell's sense of the Christian religion ; to pursue to death the aged and innocent Lord Stafford, solely because he was a Roman Catholic, was not "doing anything *basely ;*" to dispute with his sovereign the sad prerogative of remitting the extreme barbarity of the sentence, was not *inhuman !* Of the death of Lord Stafford, Mr. Macaulay writes: "The circumstances of his trial and execution ought to have given an useful warning to the *Whig leaders.* A large and respectable minority of the House of Lords pronounced the prisoner not guilty. The multitude, which, a few months before, had received the dying declarations of Oates's victims with mockery and execration, now loudly expressed a belief that Stafford was a murdered man. When he, with his last breath, protested his innocence, the cry was 'God bless you, my lord; we believe you, my lord.' A judicious observer might easily have predicted that the blood then shed would shortly have blood."*

The Archbishop Oliver Plunkett was brought over from Ireland, and the penalty of treason, in all its brutal severity, was inflicted on the illustrious and venerable prelate.

By a just retribution of heaven, blood was required for all this innocent blood, shed so profusely by bigoted and merciless Whigs. Before two years from the murder of Archbishop Plunkett, his chief persecutor had expiated his guilt on the scaffold. In summing up the character

* History of England, vol. i. chap. 2, page 260. Sixth Edition.

of his celebrated ancestor, Lord John Russell observes, "The political opinions of Lord Russell were those of a Whig. His religious creed was that of a *mild* and *tolerant Christian.*" And such it was, no doubt, according to *Whig notions* of Christian mildness and toleration.

With regard to the charge on which Lord Russell was tried, the indictment may have been incorrectly drawn under the statute of Edward III.; but the jury was fairly and lawfully constituted,* and there is no reason to suppose that there existed in their minds any disposition unfavourable to the prisoner.

"If the King had prosecuted his opponents, he had prosecuted them *according to the proper forms*, and before *the proper tribunals.* The evidence now produced for the Crown was at least as worthy of credit, as the evidence on which the noblest blood of England had lately been shed *by the opposition.* The treatment which an accused Whig had now to expect from judges, advocates, sheriffs, juries, and spectators, was no worse than the treatment which had lately been thought by the Whigs good enough for an accused Papist."†

It was proved distinctly, that Lord Russell had been a party to a conspiracy for altering forcibly the lawful succession to the throne; that he had been present when "some discourse there was of the feasibleness of securing and seizing the Guards,‡ which he heard mentioned as a

* "After the Revolution, the sheriffs, the secondaries and their clerks, and the ten surviving jurors, were examined before a Committee of the House of Lords; but the result of their answers is that the jury were fairly selected, and that no attempt was made to influence their verdict."—*Lords' Journals.*

† Macaulay, *ut supra.*

‡ On his trial, Lord Russell said there was *no discourse* of surprising the Guards.

thing might easily be done." He did, however, exclaim against "killing the Guards in cold blood, which he looked upon as a detestable thing; and *so like a Popish practice*, that he could not but abhor it." "By mere accident, he stepped in at Shepherd's for the purpose of taking some wine," and he chanced on a meeting of conspirators!—"Rebellion lay in his way, and he found it."

"But it was the doctrine of the courts of law, that to conspire to levy war is treason, when the object of such conspiracy is to destroy, or depose, or *restrain and control the King*. Was not Lord Russell a party to the design of compelling the King, by force, to banish and disinherit the presumptive heir to the Crown? Had he not attended meetings of which this was the only real object? Did he not concur in the design of raising an insurrection in Scotland, to co-operate with another in England for the same purpose? On these questions, which hardly admit of doubt, he was studiously silent,* probably because he could neither deny them with truth, nor admit them without danger to his associates. When he embarked in them, he must have been aware that he staked his life on the result. Never was any Government, however liberal, known to admit in practice, that insurrection against itself ought to be suffered with impunity."† How many of the persons condemned to death for the abortive rebellion in Ireland two years since, had committed overt acts of treason? perhaps two, or three, at the utmost.

* Lord Russell himself says in his dying declaration, "I was also advised not to confess matter of fact plainly, since that must have brought me within the guilt of misprision."

† Lingard.

It appears, also, that these Whig conspirators had, at one time, a secret understanding with the Court of Versailles, "which exhorted the Whigs not to flinch, and to rely with confidence on the protection of France." I quote again the history of Mr. Macaulay:—"While the leaders of the opposition thus *revolved plans of open rebellion*, but were still restrained by fears or scruples from taking any decisive step, a design of a very different kind was meditated by some of their accomplices. Thus, there were two plots, *one within the other*. The object of the great Whig plot was *to raise the nation in arms against the Government;* the lesser plot, commonly called the Rye House plot, in which only a few desperate men were concerned, had for its object the assassination of the King, and of the heir presumptive."* After this statement of historical facts, who would be prepared for the inference of the accomplished author, that "Lord Russell was beheaded in defiance of law and justice?" The vaunted eulogy, in the patent of King William and

* "The Duke of Ormonde, who had an old friendship with the Earl of Bedford, was much concerned to see the behaviour of Lord Russell, and to find that he seemed not sensible of the peril he was in; for his Grace always thought that young nobleman's case to be very dangerous; and so it proved soon after, when he was convicted and beheaded." In a letter from the Duke to the Earl of Arran, dated July 7, his Grace expresses himself in these words: "Ever since about the midsummer day last, we have been satisfied of the truth of the information first given of a design laid for the assassination of the King and Duke, and for the raising of a rebellion in England and Scotland. And though I make them two designs, because it doth not yet appear, that all who were in at the rebellion were for the assassination, or privy to it; yet those crimes are so near akin, and the time for consulting for them both almost the same, and some of the persons in at both, that nothing but the monstrousness of the ingratitude of such a parricide in such as the Duke of Monmouth, the Lord Russell, and Lord Grey, can leave a doubt, but that it was all one entire plot, though consisting of two parts, and to be acted by several persons."—*Carte's Life of Ormonde*, Vol. ii. Book 8.

Queen Mary, creating a dukedom for the family of Lord Russell, is worth exactly this and no more; that the son-in-law and daughter,* who had just expelled their father from his throne and country, would, as a matter of course, extol the conduct of a nobleman who had lost his life for a conspiracy to effect the same object. As to the recorded sentiments of Mr. Fox, an authority, in the opinion of Lord John Russell, "not easily matched by that of any lawyer," every one knows that Mr. Fox was a great statesman, eloquent, accomplished, and of a kind and generous disposition. But it is equally certain that Mr. Fox was a thorough-going Whig partisan; and, if the assertion of Dr. Johnson, "that the devil was the first Whig," had been proved to demonstration, there can be little doubt that Mr. Fox would have readily acknowledged "the Prince of Darkness to be a gentleman," and an ill-used gentleman, too.

What would the Whig advisers of Royalty have said if, towards the close of the reign of William the Fourth, the chiefs of the high Orange party had entered into an extensive conspiracy "to raise the nation in arms against the Government," for the purpose of banishing and excluding from the throne the heiress presumptive, our present most gracious Sovereign? Should we have heard of patriotic victims, of martyrs to civil and religious freedom, had plots like those of Lord Russell been

* Of this Queen's conduct on her arrival at the Palace, from which her father had been driven, Evelyn observes: "She came into Whitehall laughing and jolly as to a wedding, so as to seem quite transported. She rose early the next morning, and, in her undress, as it was reported, before her women were up, went about from room to room to see the convenience of the house."—*Evelyn's Diary.*

No wonder that the Duchess of Marlborough said, "Mary wanted bowels!"

proved against *them*, and visited with exemplary punishment? Though perhaps not aware of the extreme lengths to which some of his Whig associates were prepared to go, yet, if their murderous design had been carried into effect, would not Lord Russell have been justly considered as implicated in this "plot within a plot," which formed part of the "great Whig conspiracy to raise the nation against the Government?"

"Lord Russell made but a feeble defence."* He gave no proof of an enlightened and superior mind. He appears, from the commencement of his trial, to have been oppressed by the conviction that it was impossible to refute the evidence of his guilt. His objections were limited to matters of form, to the mode in which the sheriffs had been appointed, to the selection of the jury, and the construction put on the act of Edward the Third. He was found guilty, and condemned to die the death of a traitor.† The odious and disgusting sentence was changed by the King into that of beheading. On this occasion his Majesty is said to have observed, that he presumed "Lord Russell would not dispute his prerogative as he had done in the case of Lord Stafford." Vast sums of money were offered to the King's mistress to procure a pardon, and the unfortunate prisoner was induced to petition the Throne for mercy; avowing that "he had been present at meetings which he is convinced were unlawful," offering to "live in any part of the world the King should appoint, and never to meddle any

* Lingard.

† His fellow-conspirator, Lord Essex, escaped a similar doom, by self-destruction in the Tower.

more in the affairs of England."* But, the most inglorious part of the affair was, his supplication to the Duke of York, whom he had endeavoured with his utmost ability to degrade and to injure.† He says, "I do faithfully engage myself, that if it shall please the King to pardon me, and if your Royal Highness will interpose in it, I will in no sort meddle any more in the least opposition to your Royal Highness." "And, if your Royal Highness will be so gracious to me as to move on my account, as it will be an engagement upon me, beyond what I can in reason expect, so it will make the deepest impressions on me possible; for no fear of death can work so much with me, as so great an obligation will for ever do." This was certainly not the act of a man of unshaken courage, and of a nice sense of honour. This deplorable weakness could only add to the gratified revenge of the cold and unforgiving Prince, to whom it was addressed. Lord Russell seems to have been conscious how unbecoming it was of his name and station, for he said to Doctor Burnet, "This will be printed and will be selling about the streets as my submission, when I am hanged." It was, indeed, a miserable submission, equally painful and fruitless, such as his noble-minded and in-

* "Lord Russell indulged no hope of success from this petition. It could not be expected that Charles should extend to one whom he thought guilty of treason, that mercy which the same individual and his associates had, *by intimidation, prevented him from extending to so many victims* whom he believed to be innocent."—*Lingard.*

† "It was to the influence of Lord Russell's authority, as much as to the contrivance of Shaftsbury, that the Duke owed his banishment from the council and from the country; Lord Russell had moved and supported in successive Parliaments the Bill of Exclusion, and it was in reality to deprive him of the succession, and perhaps of life, that he had engaged in those intrigues, for which he had been condemned."—*Lingard.*

trepid consort would never have stooped to, to save her own life, though she consented to forward it in the vain hope of preserving his. The relation of Lord Russell's trial is given with great fairness by his distinguished biographer, though many will dissent from the conclusion which he has adopted. It really is full time to break through the trammels of a legend so fabulous and absurd, as the martyrdom of Lord Russell in the cause of civil and religious freedom. He was a martyr to his own ungovernable bigotry, which made him swift to shed innocent blood, and finally involved him in those treasonable practices for which he deservedly suffered.* When, however, I reflect on the great wealth and the powerful connexions of Lord Russell, the humble submission he was induced to make, the solemn pledges he proffered, "never to meddle any more in the affairs of England, but as his Majesty should be pleased to command him," I will not undertake to decide, whether the execution of Lord Russell was wise, but I am clearly of opinion that it was just.

It cannot be disputed, that the iniquitous and cruel laws against Roman Catholics were the invention of the Whigs, who enforced them with remorseless perseverance, until it suited their political purpose to take up emancipation and confer on it a factitious and barren support. The submissive and unvarying adhesion to the Whigs of Roman Catholics, especially of the members of that religious persuasion in the Upper House of Parliament, can be accounted for only on the supposition, that they are

* "If I do not take his life, he will soon have mine," was the expression of the King.

endowed with a measure of primeval simplicity, or of impassable forgiveness of injuries, such as is rarely discovered in mere human beings under similar circumstances. On looking over the divisions in the Lords, a person would be inclined to believe, that passive obedience to a Whig Ministry was an article in the creed of Pope Pius, or had been enjoined by a decree of a National Synod. All the persecutions of Edward the Sixth, and of Elizabeth, "whiten in the shade" of the enormities perpetrated by the Whigs on Roman Catholics, during the reigns of Charles the Second, William, and Queen Anne. On the other hand, from the commencement of these party distinctions, the Tories appear to have been favourably disposed towards Roman Catholics. Mr. Macaulay says, "The appellation of Whig was fastened on the Presbyterian zealots of Scotland, and was transferred to those English politicians, who showed a disposition to oppose the Court. The name of Tory was given to Englishmen who refused to concur in excluding a Roman Catholic prince from the throne." A more likely origin of these parties may be traced to the stern, sour Puritans who brought their sovereign to the block; and in the loyal, gallant Cavaliers, who adhered to their allegiance through every vicissitude of calamity and defeat. But of whatever stock the Whigs may spring, they have proved, that their boasted "civil and religious liberty" is nothing else than arrogant domination over the Crown, and war to the death against Roman Catholics! It may be, that the Whigs have laid aside the morose exterior that distinguished their fanatic and more honest forefathers; but, the hatred of Catholicity still rankles in their hearts, and it is tolerably certain, that they would

raise the old No Popery cry to-morrow, if they thought it could, by any means, tend to prolong their possession of office.* From the earliest concessions made to Ro-

* I wrote this in October last, and I little thought that, within one month, the mask worn so long and so profitably by the Whig party would be cast aside. The late institution of a Roman Catholic hierarchy for England may be considered offensive in manner, or injudicious as to time; but it is perfectly ridiculous to suppose that the Church, or the liberties of Englishmen, could ever be affected by the jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff in any way whatever. To temporal authority the Pope makes no pretension; and if he did, it would be laughed at by all parties. The authority conferred on these bishops by the head of their Church is not new, and it is applicable only to Roman Catholics *as such*. Therefore, it may be difficult for Lord John Russell so to frame his threatened penal law, as to control the voluntary obedience of Roman Catholics to the dignitaries of their Church in matters exclusively spiritual. Hitherto, at least, the ingenuity of persecution has failed in that respect, and it is highly improbable, that his lordship will succeed in imposing his yoke on the minds and consciences of her Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects *generally*.

Amidst all this uproar, the really important point should be carefully kept in view. The question is not so much whether the recent episcopal nominations were intended by the Court of Rome as an attack on the Church and the Royal prerogatives of England, which, all circumstances considered, would be downright ludicrous; but, whether the Pope was not misled by the duplicity, or the want of firmness of the British Minister?

Will the noble lord now require his Holiness to "unfrock" his bishops, and failing, is a fleet to be sent to Civita Vecchia, as it was to the Piræus? Surely he would not fix on his country the stain of bullying every petty state in Europe! In the meantime, it might be as well for Lord John Russell, however excited his feelings may have been at the invasion of the Cardinal Archbishop, to refrain from the use of such insulting terms as "mummeries of superstition," applied to the selection he was pleased to make of religious tenets held by so large a portion of the Christian world. Such language admits of no excuse or explanation; it betrays a degree of irrepressible petulance unworthy of a statesman, and altogether unsuiting the tone and manner of a well-informed gentleman of the nineteenth century. He has, indeed, succeeded, to a lamentable extent, in rekindling the embers of religious rancour, and in checking the increase of good-will among different persuasions; while the refuse of society, who pant for disturbance on any pretext, have gained an opportunity for mischief of which they will not fail

man Catholics, down to the munificent grant for the College of Maynooth, every measure of relaxation, or of indulgence, was proposed and carried into effect exclusively by Tories. Strong in the sincerity of *their* attachment to the Established Church, *they* can afford to be liberal and tolerant to others, without risking a suspicion of their fidelity to the religion they profess.

Surrounded as we are by so many indelible memorials of Whig hostility, again I ask, why should Roman Catholics support the Whigs? If the answer should be, "for titles and situations," I at once admit the cogency of the rejoinder; on any other principle, such support is incredible and preposterous.

By the violence of their intimidations, the Whigs compelled William the Third, who was naturally of a humane and liberal disposition, to violate the treaty of Limerick, and to earn for his name the unenviable distinction of being a watchword for discord and sectarian hatred even unto our own days. More than once, he expressed an intention of renouncing the throne of England and retiring to Holland, in order to escape from the dictation of their bigotry and insolence.* Modern Ireland has

to take advantage. After all, it is not easy to discern just grounds for the excessive indignation so generally manifested in England at the *late* proceedings of the Roman Court. It ought, in justice, to have taken *another direction.*

Colonial bishops, with *territorial designations*, have been appointed by the Pope, and officially recognized by the British Government. The creation of a new Roman Catholic See at Galway called forth no remonstrance; while the Viceregal supplication to the Pontifical throne, in the affair of the Irish Colleges, seemed almost to invite the aggression that certain diplomatic doings at Rome were directly calculated to provoke.

* No sooner were the Whigs restored to power, than they pardoned and pensioned the notorious Titus Oates, in 1689.

to thank them for pauper-creating poor-laws; for demoralization superadded to famine; for prolonged disturbance and prostrated industry; for the blight of all her hopes and the waste of all her resources.

But, there is a yet graver charge affecting the tendencies of present Whiggery. I allude to the anti-christian spirit evinced in the disposal of Church patronage. It is impossible to disguise the fact, that dissent from the leading doctrines on which the Christian faith reposes, and which are common both to the Church of England, and the Church of Rome, has been no impediment whatever to Whig promotion. Among their appointments are to be found Deists and Latitudinarians of every shade, nor is it altogether improbable, that if it were feasible, "the Jew" might, in certain quarters, appear to be a fit and proper candidate for the Mitre of Canterbury. There may be Roman Catholics so bigoted, or inconsiderate, as to exult over such selections for ecclesiastical preferment, as tending to degrade and injure the Established Church. They should, however, remember that the Church of England, *strictly so called*, differs less from the ancient religion, than any other body who have separated themselves from her communion; that, its Liturgy recites the same three creeds, word for word, as received by Roman Catholics; that the Collects appointed to be read in the Book of Common Prayer are correct and beautiful translations of those in the Roman Missal; that, even the Ritual retains a strong family resemblance to that of the parent Church, and the ordinations of the latter are admitted to be valid by the Established Church. Some of the most pious and enlightened Roman Catholic divines, among them the late illustrious Bishop Doyle,

always maintained the practicability of a reconciliation between the Churches. Above all things, Roman Catholics should never forget, that the Church of England is one of the great bulwarks of Christianity itself against atheism, infidelity, and the abominable doctrines of materialist and utilitarian philosophy. If the Church of England no longer existed as such, to-morrow, *there would be made a thousand infidels, for one Protestant that was converted to Catholicity*. The tendency of the age, unhappily, is not towards an increase of faith, but to the weakening or the extinction of it altogether. Can such appointments, then, give a claim to support from any conscientious Roman Catholic Christian? But I am not surprised that a jealous feeling should exist as to the nomination *by Whigs* of the professors, to whom it is proposed to confide the instruction of youth in the lately established Irish Colleges.

I cannot forbear to notice, also, the often defeated, and as often renewed, ministerial efforts to place Jews in Parliament. It is useless to assert that they are Englishmen, professing the Jewish religion. England is not their country, they can have no *home* but Jerusalem; Jews they are, and, by the sentence of the Almighty God, Jews they must continue to be; scattered among all nations, but belonging to none, until the destined hour of their enlightenment, forgiveness, and restoration. The attempt to amalgamate them with the people of England, by a fellowship in our social relations, and in the framing and the execution of our laws, is, in my humble sense, a design as impious, and as certain to fail, as was the daring enterprise of Julian to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem. The instant that, by any act of human volition,

the barrier between the Jewish nation and the rest of mankind should be levelled, one of the living miracles on which Revelation rests would no longer exist; to the great exultation, no doubt, of atheists, unbelievers, and Whig political economists. The hopes and the affections of Jews are all concentrated on Jerusalem; in whatever part of the world their lot may be cast, the bitter sense of exile presses on their hearts as mournfully now, as it did of old, when they hung their harps on the willows by the waters of Babylon, and sat and wept when they remembered Sion.* God forbid that I should, by word or action, insult the fallen condition of that ancient and once glorious people. I view them with feelings of awe and commiseration. We have no commission to aggravate the fearful doom under which the Jews have languished for nearly nineteen centuries, neither have we authority to mitigate, or to annul it. I submit, that without being exposed to the charge of bigotry, a Christian may shrink from the legislative co-operation of men who proclaim that He whom we believe to be our Redeemer and our God, was a mere impostor—a justly executed malefactor! The subject is too awful for casuistry or subterfuge: with the tremendous imprecation, "His blood be upon us and upon our children," present to my mind, I dare not question the justice of the Divine sentence which man, in the exuberance of his shallow wisdom, vainly endeavours to set aside.

In the same spirit of antichristian legislation, the virtual repeal of the law against usury was carried. Usury is repeatedly denounced as a great crime both in the

*Psalm 136. Heb. 137.

Old and New Testament, yet, the practice of it has not only been sanctioned by the Legislature, it has even been enjoined by the Ministers of a Christian Sovereign. I am aware of the burst of vituperation and ridicule to which I expose myself from the disciples of a school, of which one of the most eminent professors pronounced usurers to be the benefactors of the human race;* nevertheless, I do dispute with these blatant worshippers of Mammon, the fitness of removing all restraint on the inordinate covetousness of man, and of placing youth, inexperience, and defenceless want, at the mercy of insatiable and unscrupulous extortioners. It has been alleged that the law against usury was evaded, and that therefore it was safer to legalize what it was impossible entirely to prevent. How often has murder been committed with impunity; are we, therefore, to abolish the statutes against homicide? The duty of a legislator is to guard against the perpetration of crime, to provide for its detection and punishment, by every means that human sagacity can devise; never to suggest, or to protect the commission of evil. The truth is, that your philosophic pretenders to statesmanship are at issue with the Bible on this as on other points. Their object is to establish the hateful supremacy of riches, and in furtherance of this design, they consider it a praiseworthy act for man to profit freely by the wants and the calamities of his fellow-mortals.

In all these things may be clearly traced a reckless spirit of innovation, a morbid longing for change, an ominous propensity to adopt principles and support pro-

* Jeremy Bentham.

jects tending directly to disturb and to demoralize society. On whatever side I turn, it is in vain that I seek satisfactory reasons for the habitual devotion of Roman Catholics to the representatives of the men who framed the exterminating penal code, to the inheritors of their policy and the vindicators of their atrocities. I allude not to the conduct of this or that individual. I know how variously the political opinions of the most perfect mortals are liable to the influence of particular views and circumstances; it is against the grovelling obsequiousness of Roman Catholics, as a body, towards the Whigs as a political party, that I indignantly protest; and once more I ask, on what principle of religion, of sympathy, or common sense, do Roman Catholics support the Whigs?

CHAPTER VI.

RECAPITULATION—GOVERNMENT AND MEASURES NECESSARY FOR IRELAND—MODERN STATESMEN—WHIG ADMINISTRATION—CONCLUSION.

I RETURN with a heavy heart to the afflicting subject of Ireland. Even to a cursory observer, this collapse of industrious enterprise, this abandonment of hope, this moral decomposition of society, present some novel and deeply interesting features. There is at the same time profusion and misery; a hectic glare of extravagance and luxury in the midst of desolation and want. Were a stranger to see the apparent stir of business, the handsome equipages, the superb display in the shops, the entertainments of all kinds, he could hardly suppose that he was in the metropolis of an impoverished and disheartened people, trembling on the verge of utter ruin. This may be in some degree accounted for from the lavish expenditure of the artificially rich class, either fundholders, annuitants, or placemen, who thrive on the calamities of the nation at large; for they command three times the quantity of the produce of overtasked and ill-requited industry that they ought in fairness and justice to receive. Whatever money remains is unwholesomely congested in the capital, whither many of the landed proprietors, either expelled from their ancient homes, or unable any longer to afford the becoming hospitalities of

their rank, hasten to conceal the humiliation of their downfall. Few persons can anticipate what their own condition may be at the end of six months; a reckless feeling prevails extensively; as in a town where the plague rages, men hasten to enjoy the brief space of life that may remain. There is absolutely a ferment of circulation in the metropolis; money cannot remain stationary except in the gripe of inveterate and impracticable misers. I have repeatedly seen, of late, men and women in tattered garments bidding at auctions for books, pictures, and articles of luxury, which were paid for on the spot. The rivalry of cheapness has wrought this bad effect among many others, that here, as in England, it has given the poorer classes a knowledge of luxuries, and a consequent taste for them, which is not conducive to their happiness or to their morality.

> "Nunc patimur longæ pacis mala; sævior armis
> Luxuria incubuit."*

While the fine old houses of the fallen aristocracy are either decaying or sold at a low price, more modern and elegant buildings in fashionable localities are easily disposed of at extremely high rents. The innumerable villas scattered over the beautiful suburbs of Dublin are fitted up with a refinement of expenditure fully equal to those in the vicinity of London. Adventurers from all parts of the world send over their advertisements, or flock in person to raise contributions on Ireland. And, what is most astonishing, they succeed to a considerable extent. Farmers are every day emigrating to America, having

* Juvenal, Sat. vi.

their pockets well lined with sovereigns, notwithstanding the *rapacity and extortion* of landlords. The building of churches in excellent taste, and with the most costly materials, proceeds uninterruptedly; and, what is deserving of admiration, with such ruined means and such numerous demands, nowhere can be found, in proportion, so many valuable and well-supported charitable institutions as in the city of Dublin.

But, under this deceptive surface, lies a fearful gulf of demoralization and real want. I have heard from a magistrate of the highest respectability, that nothing can exceed the depravity which comes before him daily in the discharge of his official duty. He ascribed it to the pressure of extreme destitution, and a longing for gratifications formerly unthought of by the poorer classes. A Roman Catholic clergyman of great piety and good sense attributed to the same cause the growing immorality and decay of religious feeling among his parishioners. The restraint of honesty seems to have disappeared altogether. Money *must be had*, by all means and at any price.

This is the moment for an intelligent and humane Government so to regulate the relations of society as to place the object of this ardent desire within the reach of all who are willing to labour for it honestly; to turn the workings of human passion to the account of morality and order; to remove temptation from the poor and ignorant, and give them at least a chance of becoming virtuously independent.

Another remarkable fact connected with this perilous social disorganization, is the vast increase of insanity

among the middle and lower orders. I have it from eminent medical authority, that the lunatic asulums are everywhere crowded beyond all former example, and that applications for admission continue to be made, with which it is impossible to comply. It is but too evident that unforeseen and overwhelming calamity has in most instances caused this lamentable wreck of intellect. Is *this*, then, a time to dally with power as if it were the plaything of a child, or to use it only as a child might a sword, for mischief?

The first step to be taken for the regeneration of Ireland is, to establish the security of life and property. We are told that we have a Government and constituted authorities: but of what avail are they amidst the open violation of all law, and where a week's cessation of murder may be called "halcyon days?"

By whatever stretch of power, at any risk or sacrifice, these atrocious practices must be effectually suppressed, before improvement of any kind can be attempted. In the name of outraged heaven, let there be no more free trade in blood. The paramount supremacy of the law being asserted, the spirit of industry should be stimulated, the capabilities of the country should be called from the state of abeyance to which they have been too long consigned, and every pains taken to inculcate habits of order, punctuality, and method. The people should be taught that there are more useful and satisfactory modes of employing their time, than in the bewildering pursuits of political agitation. They should be made to comprehend that they are not called on to govern the State, or to control the Legislature: that they shall no longer be ruled by clubs and confederacies, and that the rural po-

pulation might very well meet for purposes of business or amusement, without forthwith forming committees, appointing chairmen and secretaries, and entering into discussions not always suited to the ear of the Attorney-General.

I have, in a former chapter, hinted my doubts that the late franchise granted to Ireland would contribute to the happiness or advantage of the people. I look on it as an insidious gift, bestowed for a party purpose. On this point, as on that of the Repeal of the Union, I am anxious not to be misunderstood. I should wish that the electoral franchise were extended even to universal suffrage, provided that the entire people were sufficiently well informed to make a judicious use of it, and completely free as to the disposal of their votes.* I submit that education has not yet made sufficient progress to warrant a large increase of the elective body; and even among those who may be competent to form a correct choice, a considerable portion have no freedom of election. Their votes are *not their own*, but the property of a club, of a demogogue, or a league, and woe to him who dares exhibit symptoms of independence. Thus it was, that the Reform

* "Liberty, the most ardent of our wishes, must be bestowed with caution, in order that the sacrifices which are made, for the purpose of gaining it, be not rendered useless. Every civilized people is in a state to be free; but the degree of freedom which a country can enjoy, ought to bear an exact proportion to the measure of its civilization. If the first exceed the last, no power can save them from anarchy. Such improvements as the country is prepared to receive, should be gradually and judiciously introduced."—*San Martin's Address to the Peruvians*, 1821.

"Look at the sort of persons chosen at elections where the franchise is very general, and you will find either fools, who are content to flatter the passions of the mob, for a little transient popularity, or knaves who pander to their follies, that they may make their necks a footstool to their own promotion."—*Sir Walter Scott.*

Bill, which nearly extirpated nomination boroughs in Great Britain, so far from adding to the freedom of constituencies in Ireland, at once converted two-thirds of its representation into a "monster" borough, at the sole disposal of one individual. Another proof, if it were necessary, that English institutions are not always particularly happy in their application to the existing state of Ireland. The new franchise, by making the vote consequent on mere occupation, will tend to discourage the granting of leases, and invite further aggression on the independence of the voter; while the required payment of rates, in many districts enormously high, will either disfranchise thousands, or open a ready market for a wealthy purchaser. I repeat it, the points of paramount importance to the Irish constituencies are information and perfect freedom of choice. It is deeply humiliating to Irishmen, to see speculating adventurers rushing from all quarters to be returned to Parliament, on the strength of some vague shibboleth which binds them to nothing, but merely conveys to their constituents their adhesion to some indefinite, darling something or other, not expressed, or, indeed, very well understood by either party. Of those to whom "Repeal" was an "open sesame" for the House of Commons, how few there were who gave it the same meaning, or any meaning at all, except the selfish purpose of the moment!

The abstract principle of self-government, of which *no rational being can deny the justice or propriety*, gave these candidates little concern; they never troubled themselves to consider the weighty obstacles that stood in the way of repealing the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland; or if they did, they took good care to eschew the perilous honesty of declaring them.

It is quite impossible for any Government to act successfully and advantageously for the country, so long as ignorant individuals are suffered to erect themselves into a tribunal of public opinion, and to rule, with no light hand, the actions, the words, and, as far as they can, the very thoughts of the community. People associate under their direction, professedly for the purpose of making speeches and passing resolutions; but the idea of approaching action preoccupies every mind. Fencing with the laws, as a preparation for overturning them, is a practice that no wise Government would tolerate for a day. A writer of great political eminence, and a determined admirer of democratic institutions, observes, that "of all kinds of liberty, the unrestrained liberty of association for political purposes is that which can be with least safety conceded to the people; for, if it does not plunge them into anarchy, it is ever on the brink of it." Therefore, decided steps should be taken to put a stop to agitation, at least for purposes of personal ambition, for profit, or for mere mischief. The grievance trade should be declared illicit, and dealt with accordingly. But, to make this line of policy irreproachable and safe, every just and reasonable cause of complaint should be promptly and entirely removed. To stifle the voice of remonstrance, while wrongs remain unredressed, is an act of monstrous tyranny, as well as of consummate folly; for nothing is more to be dreaded than the compulsory silence of men conscious of injury, and waiting their time. Government should take the initiative in all measures of redress, or reform of existing laws; to leave them to be extorted by popular tumult, indicates a lamentable want of ability or of moral courage in the rulers. Homœopathic doses of relief will not answer in

the case of Ireland; the remedy must be proportionate to the evil.* The current of national feeling must be turned into another channel; and the people should learn to confide in an Executive, fully alive to their wants, too vigilant for surprise, and too formidable for resistance. An administration that, bold in the rectitude of its intentions, would proceed straightforward in the glorious task of improvement and reconstruction; unmoved by party violence, by calumny, or intrigue: prepared to suspend the letter of the Constitution, if it were necessary for the purpose of preserving its spirit and restoring its salutary action; but, even during that suspension, adhering to the sacred principles of right and justice.

The folly and the oppression of man have impoverished and degraded Ireland. The hand of God lies heavy on her now. Perhaps but a short space may remain during which human efforts might be available for reparation and amendment. Alas! there are no traces of true patriotism, no restorative elements, no rational prognostics of success in all the ceaseless turmoil of Irish political agitation. There have been speeches, and meetings, and resolutions without end; "rents" and tributes innumerable have been collected; the people were trained to live in perpetual adoration of themselves and their leaders, and gratified with the often-repeated and ever-welcome assurance that they were "the most oppressed and the finest peasantry under heaven." The people of Ireland have been purposely divided; they have been frequently duped and misled; they have been grievously

* The cultivation of flax is now the panacea for all the evils that afflict Ireland!! The growth of hemp, inasmuch as Ministers might be concerned, would be more appropriate, and decidedly more efficacious as a *remedial* measure, than anything that has been hitherto brought forward.

wronged; but with all their faults of native growth or of foreign culture, my unfortunate countrymen are not incorrigible. Their hapless condition is not beyond the grasp of a humane, enlightened, and intrepid mind; the present moment is in some respects propitious for attempting great and salutary changes. The very difficulty of succeeding only adds to the necessity for exertion.*

After such a lengthened period of habitual misrule on the one hand, and violation of the laws on the other, it cannot be expected that men may be won over to steadiness and order by bland exhortation, or paternal remonstrance. You must control while you cherish, and correct while you encourage. Surely we may yet be permitted to believe in the possible formation of an able, honest, determined Ministry, whose actions would bear the light of open day, freed from the obscure manœuvering, the *intrusive littleness*, and low cunning that constitute the statesmanship of modern "red tape" men of business. Nearly all those who are designated as the rising politicians of the day belong to this class. They have their merit, no doubt: it should be acknowledged and duly rewarded. "Un zéro bien placé a une grande valeur;" but let them be chained to their desk, the appropriate and exclusive sphere of their usefulness. The very qualities that render them valuable in a subordinate

* It may, perhaps, excite some surprise that I have made no allusion to the political influence of the Roman Catholic clergy. I do not think that it would answer any useful purpose to discuss that subject at this particular moment. Besides, I have long considered the active interference of that reverend body in political matters as not being in itself a primary movement, but rather as one of the anomalous consequences of a faulty and inefficient administration.

department, are in a great degree incompatible with a higher order of talent, which accordingly they sneer at, as dangerous and visionary.*

A modern accomplished statesman is a paragon of duplicity and cunning, with a heart most sensitive to pressure from without, but devoid of generous impulse within, and a head well stored with plagiarisms, and furnished with plausible subtleties of all sorts. At the head of this school of triumphant mediocrity stood, *facile princeps*, the late Sir Robert Peel—a man with vast powers of application, of indefatigable industry, and most useful memory. None better understood the practice of the House of Commons, or could avail himself more dexterously of that knowledge. To loftiness of mind, to warmth of feeling, or originality of thought, he had no pretensions whatever. There was no portion of his extensive reading that was not always at his command; he never forgot even a happy phrase, and never hesitated to appropriate it without ceremony at the first convenient opportunity. Sir Robert Peel was, in truth, only the manufacturer of other men's ideas; nor is there, in all the voluminous records of his elaborate oratory, one idea or sentiment of his own that ever was, or ever will be, quoted either for ornament or illustration. His appearance was characteristic of his disposition: it was neither dignified nor easy. Educated with the utmost care, and accustomed to the highest society of Europe, nevertheless there was a "constant struggle to appear the fine gentleman;" his condescension was offensive

* "Ceux qui sont capables d'inventer sont rares; ceux qui n'inventent point sont en bien plus grand nombre, et par conséquent, les plus forts; et voila pourquoi lorsque les inventeurs cherchent la gloire qu'ils méritent, tout ce qu'ils y gagnent c'est qu'on les traite de visionaires."—*Pascal.*

and his dignity ludicrous.* It was amusing to see the right hon. gentleman with one hand on his hip, and the other flinging back the breast of his coat, delivering a well-rehearsed discourse to an audience prepared to cheer every sentence of this spoiled child of the House of Commons. Even these traits of manner may not be considered as trifling or irrelevant; for every particular connected with the public career of a statesman who exercised so long-continued and powerful an influence over the national councils, becomes an object of legitimate and interesting inquiry. Nor is it at all improbable, that the interdiction of aristocratic bearing which Nature imposed on Sir Robert Peel might have awakened, in a greater or less degree, the hostility he displayed to the ancient territorial proprietors.

But far more important charges await the memory of the departed statesman, from the deplorable consequences of his vacillating principles. His admirers may assert that his motives were honourable, that his tardy convictions were sincere; but either his original judgment was invariably wrong, or he wanted the moral courage to adhere to what he believed to be right. Sir Robert Peel seems never to have felt that delicacy towards his own reputation that would have hindered him, even when fairly convinced of his error, from coming forward as the proposer of measures in direct contradiction to his deliberate and recorded opinions. Under the auspices of his intelligent and experienced father, he commenced his public life as a strenuous opponent of the monetary doctrines of Mr. Horner. Mr. Peel subsequently brought in the fatally celebrated Cash Pay-

* Rochefoucault says—"L'air bourgeois se perd quelquefois à l'armée, mais il ne se perd jamais à la cour."

ment Act of 1819, which has conferred on his name a distinction more permanent than enviable. The bitterness of his opposition to the claims of Roman Catholics obtained for him the felicitous cognomen of "Orange Peel;" and with the accents of "No Popery" still lingering on his tongue, he introduced the Emancipation Bill of 1829. On his unexpected return to power, after the expulsion of the Whigs by William the Fourth, we find the Right Hon. Baronet addressing the constituency of Tamworth in these terms:—"I have the firmest conviction that public confidence cannot be secured by any other course than that of frank and explicit declarations of principle; that vague and unmeaning professions of popular opinions may quiet distrust for a time, may influence this or that election, but that such professions must ultimately and signally fail, if, being made, they are not adhered to, or if they are inconsistent with the honour or character of those who made them. Now, I say at once that I will not accept power on the condition of *declaring myself an apostate from the principles on which I have hitherto acted.*" Sir Robert Peel assumed the chief command, and it was not long before he proved his unfitness for the position he occupied. He dissolved the Parliament at once, and thereby threw away a most important advantage. Under far more discouraging circumstances, Mr. Pitt contended with a hostile House of Commons, until the greatness of his genius effected a revolution in the public mind, and *then* he dissolved Parliament with complete success.—The Minister was defeated in the new House at the election of a Speaker; and when beaten on his tithe law, by the Whig amendment for the appropriation of Church revenue—a motion that bore on the face of it the impress of trickery and

faction—he gave up his Bill and fled from office. He might justly have said—"My tithe arrangement is a good one; you admit its merit and the pressing necessity for it; you have succeeded in factiously connecting with it a proposition which you all well know will ensure its rejection elsewhere: let the responsibility rest with the opponents of my measure."

But Sir Robert Peel resigned—

> "Tel brille au second rang qui s'éclipse au prémier,
> Et devient lâche chef d'intrepide guerrier."
>
> *Henriade.*

Five years after, Sir Robert Peel said, in the House of Commons:—"Well then, Sir, I am asked to enter an inquiry at the bar, as to the operation of the corn-laws. Why do I resist it? Upon the ground merely, that the inquiry would consume the time of the House? I do not resist it on any of those grounds. I resist it from *the strong conviction in my own mind, that the present system of corn-laws ought to be maintained.*"* On this "frank and explicit declaration of principle," Sir Robert Peel obtained the support that made him Prime Minister of England, to the grievous injury of the great Protectionist party, who believed him to be incapable of declaring himself an apostate from the principles he had hitherto professed. It cannot be denied, that by his versatile opinions and fluctuating policy, Sir Robert Peel lowered the standard of ministerial morality, and greatly damaged the confidence of the people in the principles and profes-

* So far did the Right Hon. Baronet carry the sensitiveness of his adhesion to protective duties, that he actually returned a present of a superb waistcoat, because the design was a sheaf of wheat, with the offensive word "free" across it! And *this* not long before the grand circumvolution.

sions of public men."* Of the personal good qualities and worth of the deceased statesman, I know nothing, and am quite willing to accept them at the highest estimate of his most devoted followers. But, the more excellent and honourable his private character may have been, the more pernicious it became, when he lent its weight to the mischief of his public example :—

"Totius autem injustitiæ nulla capitalior est, quàm eorum qui quum maximè fallunt, id agunt ut viri boni esse videantur."—CICERO.

On the memorable conversion of Sir Robert Peel to the doctrines of Messrs. Cobden and Bright, there was found but *one* Cabinet Minister† who adhered to his principles, and indignantly refused to pass through the Caudine forks.

If, instead of inheriting immense riches, Sir Robert Peel had succeeded to a decent competence only, it is not probable that he ever would have reached distinction or pre-eminence. He would, no doubt, have been the admired of the vestry, the oracle of the village club, and if he ever reached the bench, the "*decus et tutamen*" of the Quarter Sessions. Yet, he was well suited to the age in which he lived, and the task he undertook. Sir Robert Peel will long continue to be a great man to that numerous party, who consider that the sole purpose of creation was the uninterrupted interchange of commodities ; who look on traffic as the presiding Divinity over human affairs, and hold, that the principal, if not

* For a complete exposure of the erroneous inferences and fallacious arguments of the late Sir R. Peel, see a very clever pamphlet, entitled "The Act of False Reasoning Exemplified." London : 1850.

† Lord Stanley, who has more than once sacrificed his place, but never his principle or his truth.

the only end of civil government, should be to facilitate and to protect the operations of commerce.

The profuse and indefinite legislation of our day is, in itself, sufficient proof of the failing intellect and diminished energy of those by whom the Government of the country has been conducted. Where is the mind competent to redeem the consequences of so many fatal errors, and to provide for the future prosperity of the State? A great statesman is able to from a correct judgment of the nature of a principle, and seize, with a comprehensive grasp, all the bearings of a proposed measure. Having taken his position he is prepared to defend it. The threats of a League, the bellowing of a tribune, the insidious cartel of a cunning adversary, never can compel *him* to renounce the principles he had adopted, or to betray the friends who confided in his honour. Enlightened, resolute, and, above all, of inflexible integrity, of unbroken faith, *he* will, without one moment's hesitation, sacrifice power, patronage, and all that is most dear to human ambition, sooner than yield one tittle of what he believes to be just and true. In debate, *he* will express, in the manly tones of a fervid and sterling eloquence, the strong convictions of a clear and vigorous understanding. Free from the spasm of cold, malignant rage, no infirmity of temper will hurry *him* into the indecorum of treating the unanswerable arguments of an intelligent opponent, as "fit only for the stable," or of desiring a celebrated author to insert his facts in his next novel. Of the former object of such self-withering sneer, it may be truly said, that he dignified and redeemed those amusements to which the wearisomeness of inaction frequently impels an enterpris-

ing and powerful genius. The career of Lord George Bentinck was brief, but it was, in every respect, distinguished and unsullied.

> "Oh, ancient honour! Oh, unconquer'd hand,
> Whom foes unpunish'd never could withstand!
> But, England was unworthy of his name,
> Short is the date of all immod'rate fame;
> It look'd as heav'n our ruin had design'd,
> And durst not trust thy fortune and thy mind!"
>
> DRYDEN.

The hazardous condition of England calls for a Minister who can regulate his policy by a clear and enlarged view of the difficulties that surround him; *who means what he says, and performs what he promises:* who can extend his care to the well-being of *all*, and who never would consent to devote to ruin a great and important class, in obedience to the troublesome clamours of a rapacious and unprincipled faction.

Such is the leader on whom the nation's hope must fix in the hour of alarm and peril. Yes, the hour will come and the man, unless the doom of England be irrevocably decreed by a power which none may resist. The cavils of *his* enemies, the doubts of the wavering will melt away before the stern necessity of the moment, bringing with it fearful conviction to many a hesitating or reluctant mind.

The present Ministry have now been nearly five years in office. During all that time, Ireland has been rapidly sinking, not one effectual measure having been applied to relieve her afflictions, or arrest her fall. On the contrary, each succeeding year has seen her calamities increased and her prospects darkened. At length, even the most sanguine have ceased to hope, and the

stoutest hearts are stricken with dismay. All confidence between man and man is destroyed; every one is pressing on his neighbour,* reckless of the present, and despairing of the future. The circulation of Bank paper is more and more contracted; there is no value in any property but money, and *that* is not to be had on any terms.† Everything indicates an approaching break up of society, when law and order will contend in vain with the frenzy of destitution. We have *here* no manufactures; we cannot be gulled in the midst of ruin, by flattering commercial reports got up for the purpose of creating a momentary delusion.

Yet, with a prospect so fearful before us, have Ministers cheered our failing spirit with any hope of relief, any assurance of their sympathy and good-will? No. The Prime Minister occupies his leisure in writing a "pendant" to the celebrated *Despatch* from Edinburgh, when he outbid Sir R. Peel in free-trade, as he now volunteers to outbid even Orangemen in ultra-Protestant and "no Popery" zeal. But, the circumstances are widely dif-

* One of the disastrous consequences of the Incumbered Estates Commission is, that persons who were hitherto well pleased to have their money out at interest on landed property, are taking it up in every direction; partly in the hope *of escaping the consequences of a compulsory sale,* and partly in order to purchase land at less than a third of its true value; thus adding grievously to the pressure that already exists for money, and bringing down ruin on many a proprietor, who might otherwise have withstood the storm of rapine and persecution poured upon this country by the destructive and infatuated policy of Ministers.

† Until the stringent monetary system of Sir Robert Peel be relaxed, it will be found *impossible to afford effectual relief to the people of Ireland.* Every feature of the distress denotes the nature of the evil, and points out the specific remedy. How long are the happiness and the very existence of millions of human beings to be made the sport of selfish and inhuman theorists?

ferent, and he has to deal with *a statesman of another stamp.*

The official existence of the present Ministry has frequently been described as a "necessity;" and their admirers have disported themselves with many a delectable antithesis thereon. The "necessity," however, does not arise from the absence of superior abilities. Take any twelve men out of the street, and the probability is, that nine of them would be found to surpass the actual occupants of the Treasury, in all the qualifications requisite for governing. The "necessity" lies in the decay of public spirit, the political apathy of the moment. No matter how men may have been jumbled into power, or what sort of use they make of it, any attempt to disturb their official repose is considered little short of petty treason.

> "And, if in Downing-street Old Nick should revel,
> England's Prime Minister, then bless the Devil."

There is another and more intelligible principle of this same "necessity:" the risk of the Whig party being out of place, while the perilous distemperature of the times might afford them an opportunity for greater mischief. We are constantly told that this is an age of "progress," which it is equally dangerous and useless to resist. Does it ever occur to these enthusiastic disciples of perpetual motion, to inquire *whither* we are "progressing" in this wild career of innovation? The hunger for change is not to be appeased by concession—at every step the goal recedes. Already, murmurs begin to rise against "that costly bauble," the Crown, and that "hereditary nuisance," the Peerage.

The British Constitution, that glorious monument of human wisdom, contains within itself a skilful combina-

tion of freedom and of salutary restraint. It already holds as large a portion of the democratic principle *as is consistent with the existence of monarchy in any shape.* Every addition to popular power tends to destroy the nicely adjusted balance of the State; it diminishes the security without augmenting the substantial freedom of the people. If the universal nation willed a pure democracy, it would be far better to have it at once, than thus to fritter away an unequalled Constitution, and to degrade the throne of Britain to an American rocking-stool. The tendency of our latter legislation has been to pamper the worst feelings of democracy, by establishing the dominion of the monied interest over the territorial aristocracy.* Without the latter, it is utterly impossible for a limited monarchy to exist. A despotism needs no gradation of ranks, it consists of the autocrat and his slaves: but, in a constitutional monarchy, an intermediate class is essentially necessary to protect the just rights of the subject, and uphold the independence of the Sovereign. The full and free exercise of both is requisite for the safety and the welfare of the State.

The bold and loyal yeomen of Great Britain have been crushed by unjust and perverse legislation. The farmers of Ireland are flying in crowds from its devoted shores. No smooth words, no parade of "sound general principles," no appeals to the guardian shade of the "great statesman we have lost," can reconcile men to the "progress" of destruction, or induce a hope of better days in minds worn down by suffering and callous from repeated disappointment. The question must be decided

* With a nominal preponderance in the Legislature, the landed proprietors have been for some years treated by capitalists and cotton-spinners as mere drudges, submitting to work out their own destruction.

before long, whether the ancient possessors of the soil, who founded the vaunted institutions of England, and shed their blood in defence of them, shall be stripped of their property, and their influence be transferred to a class, the monstrous excrescence of a gambling age, without love of country, or of anything else, save money and the means of acquiring it. In place of the old English landlord, who takes a pride in the comfort and respectability of his tenant, they would give us the "capitalist," who is proud of nothing but his wealth, and who considers his purchase solely in the light of a profitable investment. *He* has no ancestors to disgrace, no generous feelings transmitted through a long descent of kind-hearted predecessors. Exulting in his riches, the insolent "millocrat" comes prepared to treat the slaves of the soil as he treated the slaves of the factory.

Versed, as the present Ministers undoubtedly are, in the arts of political intrigue, and skilful as they may be in the use of every sort of delusion, they may find it a task above their strength to tide over the approaching session. Not content with the ordinary embarrassments of their arduous station, they appear to have involved themselves wantonly in perplexities, which no amount of ingenuity can solve. They have accumulated difficulties around them, which neither their own peculiar talent, nor even the posthumous protection of the "lamented statesman" can bear them safely through. With foreign states we have peace, indeed, but no cordiality. Our diplomatic policy has been made up of small provocations and unwarrantable intermeddling; of alternate bullying and submission. Our *friendly intervention* at Rome drove the Pope from his capital. Restored by the arms of Republican France, his Holiness lost no time in sending a

Most Reverend Plenipotentiary to return the obligation in Ireland.

Greece, rescued from the barbarian sway of Turkey by a Tory administration, has been worried into the payment of some thousand piastres, by the seizure of its ships, and the threat of bombardment from a British fleet, on the part of a "liberal" Government. The King of Naples, also, has good reason to remember the lively interest we took in the concerns of his Sicilian subjects. The superintending cares of our Minister at Madrid were met by his sudden and discourteous expulsion from that Court; and well do the great powers of Europe know that, if it were practicable and safe, our Foreign Office would be dabbling in their domestic broils before a week were over. Every attempt to overturn the existing institutions of other states has been honoured by the favourable regard of England; and when insurrection has been subued, the authors of it are welcomed to her shores, there, at their ease, to plan fresh treasons, and provide the means of future disturbance.

Almost the last time that Grattan spoke in the British House of Commons, he said, "the greatness of England is identified with her being; when she ceases to be great, she ceases to exist." That greatness is visibly on the decline. The most important of our domestic interests has been given as a spoil to a rapacious faction; there is not a power in any part of the world that is not well acquainted with the inefficiency of our national defences, contracted and reduced, as they have been, by the short-sighted, ill-timed parsimony of peddling economists, who cannot discern that the only safety for their money, their manufactures, and themselves, lies in being always well prepared to resist aggression from every quarter;

who, wrapped up in traffic, imagine that soldiers and sailors can be hired like factory fags when wanting, and that war can be carried on by the operations of single or double entry.

We hear every day, that Parliament *dares not* do *this*, and *dares not* do *that*. *It dares not* interfere to protect property from fraud, and toiling industry from oppression. *It dares not* strengthen the arm of justice to preserve the public tranquillity; in short, *it dares not* interfere to control the senseless prejudices and excited passions of the multitude. But there is nothing that an able, strong, and *truly honest* Government dares not propose and execute, in conformity with the spirit of the Constitution.* A Legislature and an Executive are no longer a Government, when they are coerced by what is called "pressure from without," which frequently means nothing more than the will of a lawless and unprincipled confederacy.

Notwithstanding the benevolent labours of the Peace Congress, and the touching exhortations poured forth incessantly by its members, war *may become inevitable;* and one month of war would scatter to the winds all this rubbish of free trade, and of "sound and wholesome" currency, by which the national resources have been impaired, and the national character degraded. During a period of peace, almost unequalled in duration, so far from the public prosperity having been augmented, and the waste of former war repaired, the country has been

* One of the most offensive and monstrous assumptions of modern "class legislation" is the placing of it on the Mede and Persian system. No matter how absurd, or how mischievous a measure may have proved, once carried by clamour or delusion, it is proclaimed *irrevocable*. Any man who presumes to resist this consolidation of error, this perpetuity of wrong, is given to understand that he does so with a halter about his neck, and people actually believe it!

reduced to such a state of exhaustion, that it is far less able to defend itself from a foreign foe, than it was at the close of a prolonged and expensive struggle. Can *this* have been the result of a firm, enlightened and equitable administration of public affairs? In every direction, the fatuity and weakness of the present Government are apparent. By way of preparation for rebellion in Ireland, they gave up the Arms Bill; as a compliment to the ruffianism of all nations about to congregate in London, the salutary control of the Alien Act has been abandoned! And now, forgetful of his "liberal" professions, suspected, at least, of connivance in the late Episcopal Appointments of the Roman Pontiff, the drowning Minister catches at a "no Popery" straw! Alas! Alas! poor liberal Whigs!

> "He that stands upon a slippery place,
> Makes nice of no vile hold to stay him up."—*King John.*

It is full time for every man who feels an interest in the prosperity of his native land, for every loyal and faithful servant of our gracious Queen, for every one who wishes for the maintenance of religion and good order, to protest against this mischievous and disreputable system of Government. They who from intimidation, or perhaps meaning well, have hitherto concurred in the principle of *indefinite progress*, and aided its development, would do wisely to "see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein;"* to endeavour to secure, before it be too late, some certain line of defence, where they may make a successful stand on behalf of all that yet remains of the laws and the Constitution that raised England to such unrivalled great-

* Jeremiah, chap. 6.

ness ; that caused her to be feared and respected abroad, and rendered her people united, prosperous, and happy.

"For, whatso'er their suff'rings were before,
That change they covet makes them suffer more.
All other errors but disturb a State,
But *innovation* is the blow of fate.
If ancient fabrics nod and threat to fall,
To patch their flaws and buttress up the wall,
Thus far 'tis duty; but here fix the mark,
For all beyond it is to touch the Ark.
To change foundations, cast the frame anew,
Is work for rebels, who base ends pursue;
At once divine and human laws control,
And mend the parts by ruin of the whole.
The tamp'ring world is subject to this curse,
To physic their disease into a worse."

ABSALOM AND ACHITHOPHEL.

APPENDIX.

(A.)

11*th December*, 1849.

Ballinasloe. — At the last meeting of the Ballinasloe Guardians it appeared that the cost of provisions, &c., for the week was, £157 12s. 8d.; amount of rate collected, £00 0s. 0d. !!! remaining due on the union, £23,735 12s. 5d.

Roscommon.—Some difference of opinion exists between the Guardians of this union, relative to a proposition of Mr. Brown, that a rate of 10s. 6d. in the pound be struck. Mr. Taaffe said that "the impossibility of collecting such a rate was strongly exemplified by the fact, that of the last 3s. rate, fully one-third remained uncollected."

The number of paupers in the house is 2,293; those receiving out-door relief amount to sixteen, and the sums paid to twelve relieving officers amount to £365 annually !!!

Castlebar.—The number of paupers receiving relief in this impoverished union averages 3,458.

Carrick-on-Shannon.—The number of paupers at the last meeting of the Board was 2,074, and the amount of rate uncollected was £6,199 2s. 11$\frac{3}{4}$d.

Castlerea.—The Vice-Guardians have left this union saddled with a debt of uncertain magnitude to the contractors. At the last meeting the Clerk stated, that the only way he was able to ascertain, when he took office, what was due, was by writing to the contractors to furnish the Board with their bills, and he believed there were about £3,000 due to them.

A discussion having followed relative to arrears of rate,

Mr. R. O'Connor said—"No measures should be left untried to have the rate all collected. Where there is nothing on the lands to distrain, let the lands be sold, if the immediate lessors do not pay."

After some further discussion,

Mr. Brown said some of the paupers were selling the clothes of the union throughout the country.

Mr. Gordon said some of the paid officers are bringing them out of the house.

The Master said it was impossible there could be much taken, as no one had the key of the store where the clothes were kept but himself and the matron. He knew there were some things taken out of the house, but not lately; he knew of one instance (that surpassed all he ever heard) where the paupers cut the blankets in two and put half on each bed so as to bring away the other blanket, and when the beds were inspected every day and the blankets seen on them it was thought all was right, till it was found out after further inspection.

In this union it has been also discovered that the ledger was not balanced; that the accounts were only audited twice a year; that the guardians were completely in the dark as to their liabilities; that the relieving officers were *doing nothing*, and yet receiving from £40 to £50 per year. The number of paupers in the union was 2,332. The Guardians have decided on publishing the names of the defaulting ratepayers.

Galway.—2,712 paupers are inmates of this union, and its auxiliary buildings. The uncollected rate amounts to £19,000. The guardians at their last meeting agreed to apply for a military and police force to protect the collectors in Killannan and Claregalway.

Drogheda.—Total receiving relief, 670.

Navan.—897 paupers are inmates here; 1,200 receiving out-door relief.

Bailieborough.—1,230 union inmates; 120 receiving out-door relief.

Listowel.—The unfortunate ratepayers have presented a petition to his Excellency the Earl of Clarendon, the opening passage of which is as follows:—

"Humbly Showeth—That rates for the relief of the poor, of 5s., 6s. 4d., 7s. 4d., 13s. 10d., and 14s. 7d. in the pound have been struck, and are about to be laid, as they have been, on six electoral divisions in this union, which, if attempted to be collected, must inevitably lead to the entire abandonment and final confiscation of the land, and ultimately leave the poor themselves unprovided for."

His Excellency, of course, has promised to "bring the matter under the attention of the Government."

Clonmel.—Total receiving relief, 1,796.

Thurles.—Total receiving relief, 1,640.

Wexford. — Total of paupers, 908 ; of the rate made in March last £3,219 remain uncollected; and yet the Poor Law Commissioners have modestly endeavoured to lay their claws on the entire balance in the treasurer's hands, for the advances under Act 10 Vic., desiring the guardians only to retain "sufficient to provide for the current expenses of the union."

Athlone.—The amount of arrear uncollected is £6000. The number of paupers for the week ending December 8 was 1,747. Their High Mightinesses the Commissioners sent a missive to the Guardians disapproving of the punishment awarded by the Board to the two female paupers, Mary Dolan and Rose Mulveyhill, who were ordered to be confined ten hours every day for a week, and put upon "short commons." The Commissioners' letter stated that it was contrary to the regulations for the punishment of refractory paupers to confine them for so lengthened a period ; and the term "short commons" was unintelligible to the Commissioners.

[They are quite right. It is the unfortunate ratepayers, not the paupers or the Commissioners, to whom the term "short commons" is intelligible.]

Mullingar.—Total number relieved, 1,655.

Ballinrobe.—At the last meeting of this Board there were thirty Guardians present. It appeared from the financial statement that this unfortunate union is indebted to contractors and officers, up to the 31st of October, in the sum of £11,000.

Gort.—The Sheriff came to the Gort Union Workhouse the other day with an execution, but he had nothing to get in it; all the things that were in it were hired, and did not belong to the union.

Boyle.—We are concerned to find that the workhouse is filling fast; within the last week thirty-eight were admitted and twenty discharged. Total remaining, 906. There were no deaths during the week. The outdoor relief list for the entire union contains the names of 120 persons.

Ennis.—The Board was occupied throughout Saturday, up to a late hour, in inspecting the books of the relieving officers and the admission of paupers, and so numerous were the applicants for relief that the Board was obliged to postpone the inspection of some of them, until the adjourned meeting, to be held on Wednesday next.

Ennistymon.—The rations of the various officers of the house are higher than that allowed in many other unions—the first class weekly rations, consisting of 14lbs. of best white bread, 7lbs. of meat, 3½oz. of tea, 1¾lbs. of sugar.—[Not a bad allowance; but what about the pauper rations?]

In this union the salaries of officers, though reduced £510, amount to £620!

Kinsale.—The total rate uncollected amounts to £6,204 3s. 8d. The number of paupers is 830.

Fermoy.—Number of paupers 2,215.

Bandon.—Number of paupers, 1,734.

Middleton.—Number of paupers, 1,735; auxiliary workhouse, 921.

Dunmanway.—The uncollected rate amounts to £5,260 14s. 7¼d. The number of paupers is 730.

Caherciveen.—Number of paupers, 932.

Clogheen.—Total paupers, 1,005; receiving out-doorr elief, 162; rate uncollected, £1,347 2s. 3d.

The Clogheen Board of Guardians have declared a rate of 6s. 8d. in the pound on the electoral division of Ballyporeen, which is the most pauperised division in the union.

Newcastle.—At the last meeting the number of inmates in the different workhouses was 2,463; the number on the out-door relief, 9,370. The Guardians are about to take Glenville House as an auxiliary workhouse, lately the residence of Captain John Massy. All the boilers used for cooking food are to be disposed of for the benefit of the union.

Kilrush.—A crisis has taken place at last in the Kilrush Union. Notwithstanding the exertions of the local Board and P.L.I., the in-door paupers were obliged to go to bed without dinner on Thursday night. The Master brought the state of the house, as regards want of provisions for that day, before the Board, when soup, and chopped turnips grown on the land, was the only food available. The out-door paupers are in a desperate state, crowding the depots, and following the relieving officers by thousands to town to get into the workhouse; but one day's admission (300 admitted) so crowded the auxiliary that admission was impossible. Barley, the produce of the land about the workhouse, has been ordered to be threshed; but are 2,600 paupers to be fed on the principle of "live horse and you'll get grass." It is fearful to think of the state of the Kilrush Union—nothing but starving creatures from the country to be seen pouring into a starving workhouse; the Board meet every day, but if we are to judge from the general confession of that body, they are able to effect no good. The chairman, Colonel C. M. Vandeleur, took the chair yesterday, and his presence was sufficient, it was thought to get the "needful," but to no purpose; out-door paupers and relieving officers were sent home, and in-door paupers recommended to go to bed.

The above facts and figures have been collected from the latest returns appearing in the provincial journals received at this office yesterday, and though they only deal briefly with twenty-nine of the 131 unions into which Ireland is divided, they afford a significant example of the working of the Irish Poor Law. Here we have, in twenty-four of these unions, an aggregate of paupers amounting in round numbers to 62,000, to which, every day and hour, large accumulations are added. On eight of these unions, in which the returns of arrears are given, there are due upwards of seventy thousand nine hundred pounds, and this crushing debt is hourly increasing. In fact, Irish Poor Law statistics are statistics of ruin—ruin rendered by Free Trade hopeless and irremediable.

In the unfortunate Kilrush Union, with which our extracts terminate this evening, the evils of the Poor Law have reached their climax. Two thousand some hundred inmates crowd the workhouse, there are upwards of twelve thousand applicants for out-door relief, and it is only on turnips and parsnips, boiled by the Matron and Master, that the inmates have been fed for days. On Thursday the Board of Guardians met, and a petition to the Commissioners was resolved on. It sets forth the awful state of the union; and, declaring that nothing but an advance of money can save thousands of lives, concludes in these words:—

"They therefore implore of the Commissioners not to lose a moment in applying to the Lords of the Treasury for relief, and they feel themselves relieved from all moral responsibility, having laid this statement of the facts before the Commissioners."

An adjourned meeting was held on Saturday, when Colonel Vandeleur, whose exertions to mitigate the sufferings of the poor are worthy of all praise, presided. From his statement it appears that the outlay in the Kilrush Union, under the admirable Poor Law, for the past eighteen months, amounted to £60,000! and that on the dismissal of the elected Board in March they were in debt but £1,500, whilst on their return to office last month they were incumbered with a debt of £15,000.

In fact, *forty-one shillings in the pound* would be required to extricate the single union of Kilrush from its financial difficulties. And where are *they* to come from?

Altogether the above returns, defective though they are, furnish some evidence of the destructive working of the Poor Law. Can any land bear up against so tremendous an incubus?

We have been assured from high authority, that pauperism and the consequent pressure of the Poor Law are on the decrease in Ireland. This is mere delusion.

A general rate of five shillings in the pound has been struck for all the electoral divisions in the Westport Union. Of sixteen electoral divisions in the Union of Castlebar, only four are rated under five shillings in the pound. In the electoral division of Loughatory, in the Union of Loughrea, the rate is sixteen shillings and eight pence in the pound.—*September*, 1850.

(B.)

Pauperism and Poor Laws.—The law of Denmark regards relief as a debt to the State, and requires all paupers receiving it "to work to the best of their ability, until all they owe is paid off." The first step is to procure them work, and the deficit only is made up in food and clothing. All who are without steady employment are treated as vagrants, and punished accordingly.

In Mecklenberg, work and a dwelling must be provided with the poor law fund for the ablebodied; and the impotent must perform such light work as they are able.

In Prussia, the police scrutinise the capacities of all applicants to maintain themselves by work, and if not, they are sent to the poorhouse, there to be taught "to earn their own livelihood." The paupers are made to support themselves to the uttermost of their ability.

In Belgium, most of the poorhouses are agricultural establishments; and at Ostend and Antwerp large amounts have been realised through the labour of the paupers, who receive a portion of their earnings according to their industry.

In France there is little attention paid to the requirement of labour in return for aid. It sets no example to other countries. Pauperism is nursed and fed with alms rather than cured by labour. There are some few exceptions, of which the Gironde is one, where labour is enforced. There are also one or two industrial day schools for pauper children, where they are taught trades and receive two meals.

The Sardinian States are quite as deficient in industrial training for their poor.

The Hanseatic Towns generally adopt the system of making relief depend on industry, and afford it only to those who will work, and, moreover, cannot find work for themselves; to such the State gives it, but not to ablebodied men.

In Bavaria, the public charge of the poor is brought to bear wholly by industrial employment for those who can, and relief without it only for

those who cannot work. And what is this work? Is it, as here, the breaking of stones, mere barren toil?—on the contrary, materials and tools are provided for all those who cannot find work, in order that they may be "usefully employed" in some mode of livelihood.

In Saxony and Wurtemberg it has ever been the law, that they who cannot find employment shall have means found them by the magistrates to earn a livelihood by their labour; but that lazy idlers who are strong and healthy shall be compelled to work.

In Russia, they who will not work voluntarily may be delivered over to any individual, and compelled to work for their own support, "at the discretion of the elder and his assistants."

In Sweden there exist "work institutions" for similar purposes, and they who will not work are sent to the house of correction.

In many parts of the United States the guardians are bound to furnish work according to the physical abilities of the destitute; so that opportunity and means of reimbursing the State for its outlay may be secured.

(C.)

Hitherto the English markets have been chiefly supplied with provisions by Ireland. How stands the case now? From an official return published in the *Morning Post*, we learn the imports of foreign breadstuffs, as they are termed, into Great Britain, for *the first ten months* of the present year, were as follow:

"Wheat	3,352,442	qrs.
Flour	2,872,870	cwt. weight.
Indian corn	1,991,587	qrs.
Barley	1,122,865	qrs.
Oats	1,061,615	qrs.
Beans	409,540	qrs.
Oatmeal	35,584	qrs.
Indian corn meal	101,787	qrs."

Now almost every shilling of the price of these articles, with the exception of three, is so much abstracted from the income of Ireland. Nor is this all. Formerly the Irish trade in beef, pork, and other kinds of flesh meat provisions, fresh and cured, was immense, and many firms, to say nothing of individuals, in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford, and the other large towns, realised fortunes by that branch of business.

Yet it was only a few days since we learned that a large portion of the contract for supplying the British Navy with beef and pork had been given to the merchants of Hamburgh. And if that were not bad enough, read the following return of animal food imported into Great Britain, for the period already mentioned :—

" Oxen, cows, and calves	44,071	
Sheep and lambs	101,309	
Pigs	1,889	
Bacon	370,134	cwt.
Salted pork	328,998	do.
Salted and fresh beef	121,812	do.
Butter	232,139	do.
Cheese	279,286	do.
Eggs ... ... (number)	86,258,229	"

Here again is Ireland robbed to the extent of several millions sterling, inasmuch as, with the exception of cheese, these articles used, in by-gone times, to have been imported from this country. We say *robbed*, because the advantage of the trade with England was indirectly held out as the principal lure to induce the Irish Parliament and their constituents to consent to the Legislative Union. That part of the implied compact is now shamefully violated in favour of strangers; and still we are told, that, so far from repining, we should be perfectly contented, and hold fast to British connexion.

And is the agricultural interest the only one that has suffered by the abolition of duties on foreign imports? Quite the contrary. Let any man, while passing through our principal streets, take a glance at the shop windows, and what will meet his eye? Notices, in large letters, intimating the arrival of French and other foreign articles of every description announced for sale at reduced prices, while our own manufacturers and artisans, whom a little encouragement would render not inferior to any in Europe, are pining away in rags and wretchedness. For the truth of what we say here of our manufacturers and artisans, we may confidently appeal to those ladies and gentlemen who have visited the annual exhibitions at the Royal Dublin Society-house, where they must have seen specimens of works of art, designed and executed in this city, which would do credit to Paris or any other European capital. Yet many, if not a majority of the persons whose taste and ingenuity have excited the admiration of all beholders, may be found neglected and forgotten in cellars and garrets. How could it be otherwise when our city is inundated with articles of foreign production?

Look, as a third instance of what the Free Trade tariff has done in the way of depressing home industry, to the following return, extending also over no more than *ten months* of the current year :—

"Clocks	...	...	(value)	£52,732
Cotton manufactures	...	...	...	868,458
Needlework embroidery	...	...	...	86,765
Lace	...	...	...	72,945
Boots and shoes of various kinds		...	...	126,177 pairs.
Boot fronts	...	...	...	461,066 do.
Gloves	...	...	...	3,051,807 do.
Silk manufactures of Europe	...	...	...	828,683
Woollen manufactures	...	...	...	611,828

But it may be said that the thousands of the industrious classes thrown out of employment by this tremendous influx of foreign articles, have the advantage of being able to purchase cheap food. What a heartless mockery! Cheap food to those who have no money to buy it, and do not possess a shilling now for the pound which they formerly used to command. Of what benefit, for example, can cheap food be to the several thousands of London needleworkers who earn no more on an average than *three pence* per day, as was lately proved? The very sight of it can only serve to tantalise the unfortunate creatures by reminding them of the bounty of GOD, withheld through the wicked policy of man.

(D.)

We have now arrived at the close of the harvest of 1850. Pretending calmly to view the present circumstances of the British farmer, and assuming that his labours have been crowned by an average harvest, the "leading (?) journal of the day" coolly informs him, that if, for the future, he obtains 45s. per quarter for his wheat he must be satisfied, for that he will be as well off as any other part of the community. After indulging in a very prosaic dissertation upon the manner in which the transition through which the nation is passing will affect the English grower, our contemporary thus proceeds :—

"The large manufactories of the cotton and woollen spinners in Yorkshire and Lancashire may be taken as the types and models of the mode in which skill and industry ought to be employed. No power is lost, no time is thrown away, EVERY ACT is performed with MATHEMATICAL PRECISION. The thing to be produced must be the

result of the least possible expense; every calculation must be so nicely made, and the system of production so accurately apportioned, that the whole profit—the final result to the capitalist—that which he obtains after replacing all that he has expended, is often only a very small per-centage upon each transaction, RAPIDITY OF OPERATIONS making up for the SMALLNESS OF THE RETURN. Now, capital employed upon land cannot, because so employed, be freed from the obligations of skill, care, accuracy, and constancy, which attach to it in every other employment. AGRICULTURE, in short, MUST BE BROUGHT UNDER THE SAME RULES WHICH GOVERN THE OTHER MANUFACTURING PROCESSES. AGRICULTURE MUST BECOME A MANUFACTURE, AND A FARM BE GOVERNED VERY MUCH AS A MILL NOW IS. The practical result, from which there is now no escape, is, that capital employed on the land, to be profitable, must be applied IN LARGE MASSES; and the persons who so apply it can no longer be a sort of UPPER FARM LABOURERS."

Correctly interpreted, this language means, that nine-tenths of the yeomanry of England, "the back-bone of the country," are to be swept away, and their places supplied by a race of men who will be able to set all the vicissitudes of the season at defiance, laugh at the storm and the tempest, the mildew and the frost, and direct and govern the elements with as much accuracy as the manufacturer can regulate his machinery.

And such is the trash daily swallowed by the thousands who consult the Oracle in Printing-house square.—*London Paper of* 21*st Sept*, 1850.

THE END.

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